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Contents

LAURENCE WHITEHEAD

OEOFFREY A. HOSKING
PATRICIA CRAIG

TERENCE CAVE
EDWARD HUGHES

P. J. RHODES
M. M. AUSTIN

DAVID PANNICK
P. D. JAMES

A. H. HALSEY

JOHN GAGE

DAWN ADES
SIMON KARLINSKY

ALAN DOWTY

MICHAEL BOURDEAUX
WILLIAM V. O'BRIEN

WILLIAMSCAMMELL

LACHLAN MACKINNON

ANDREW MOTTON
DAVID SWEETMAN

CLAUDE RAWSON

BARBARA WRIGHT
BRUCE LENMAN

MAUREEN DUFFY
SIMON BERRY

H. G. KOENIGSBERGER
HENRY KAMEN

C. R. BOXER
JOHN LUCAS

ROSEMARY ASHTON
TERENCE HAWKES

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE
D. J. ENRIQHE

TOBY FITTON
PAUL KEEGAN

MARY KATHLEEN BENET

J. K. L. WALKER
JOANNA MOTTON

RICHARD GRENIER
JOHN MELMOTH

I. A. TURNER

OILLIAN AVERY

D. A. N. JONES
JULIAN ROBERTS

R. C. S. WALKER
ANN SIEVEKINO

WARWICK BRAY

CRISPIN TICKELL
PAUL HENLEY

DERVLA MURPHY
WILLIAMFEAVER

NEIL PHILIP
BLAKE MORRISON

ALAN BROWNJOHN

DAVID MEKITTERICK
TIMOTHY D'ARCH SMITH

COVER PICTURE

ARCHAEOLOGY 852. ART 834. BIBLIOGRAPHY 856. BIOGRAPHY 857. CHILDREN'S BOOKS 854. FICTION 842-4. HISTORY 831. 833. 844. ISRAELI 836-7. LAW 832. LITERATURE 829-30. 845-6. MUSIC 835. PHILOSOPHY 851. POETRY 830. POLITICS 827-8. SOUTH AMERICA 833.

Anthony Payne, Paul Sutton and Tony Thorn-dike: *Grenada - Revolution, invasion and aftermath*. Bruce J. Calder: *The Impact of Intervention - The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924*. Edward Crankshaw: *Putting up with the Russians 1947-1981*. John Millington Synges: *The Collected Letters - Volume Two, 1907-1909*. 829.

Marguerite de Navarre: *The Heptameron*. 830. David Ellison: *The Reading of Prout*. 830. J. W. Roberts: *City of Sokrates*. 831. J. B. Salmon: *Werthily Corinith - A history of the city to 338 BC*. 831. A. W. Brian Simpson: *Communism and the Common Law*. 832. Roger Wilkes: *Wallace - The final verdict*. 832. Gillian Sutherland: *Ability, Merit and Measurement - Mental testing and English education 1880-1940*. 833.

Hans K. Roethlis and Jenn K. Benjamen: *Kravinsky - Catalogue raisonné of the oil-paintings. Volume Two, 1916-1944*. 834. Ramón Gómez de Serna: *Dali*. 834. Boris Asaf'yev: *A Book about Stravinsky*. 835. Fifty years on. 835.

Yehoshafet Harkabi: *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome*. Amnon Rubinstein: *The Zionist Dream Revisited*. Amos Oz: *In the Land of Israel*. Amos Elon: *The Israelis - Founders and sons*. 836. Martin Gilbert: *The Jews of Hope*. 836. Stephen Green: *Taking Sides*. David Hirst: *The Gun and the Olive Branch*. 837. F. T. Prince: *Later On*. Sheila Wingfield: *Collected Poems 1938-1983*. Harry Guest: *Last and Found - Poems 1975-1982. The Emperor of Outer Space*. 838.

Peter Levi: *The Echoing Green - Three elegies*. Peter Dale: *Too Much of Winter - Poems 1976-82*. Anthony Howell: *Notions of a Mirror - Poems previously uncollected 1964-1982*. 838. The Gorilla Girl (poem). 839. Moments in Milan (poem). 839. Poets Laureate and their work. 840. Letters on Civil Liberties in Wartime, 'The Reality of Communism, Bloom's Chocolate, Protecting Chatsworth etc'. 841, 855.

Commentary. *The King and Mr Bird* (ICA Cinema). 842. The periodicals, 19: ROSS. 842. Information, please. 842. Author, Author. 842. Aphra Behn: *The Rover* (Upstream Theatre) and *The Lucky Cow* (Royal Court Theatre). 843. Christopher Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus* (Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh). 843.

William S. Malby: *Alba*. 844. David E. Vassberg: *Land and Society in Golden Age Canine*. 844. Hubert Jacobs (Editor): *Documenta Maluensis 111 (1606-1982)*. 844. Eric Robinson and David Powell (Editors): *The Later Poems of John Clare: 1837-1864*. 845. George Deacon: *John Clare and the Folk Tradition*. 845. O. B. Tennyson (Editor): *A Carlyle Reader*. 846. Kenneth Friedreich (Editor): *Accompanying the Players - Essays celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980*. 846. Roy A. K. Heath: *Orestia*. 847. R. C. Hutcheson: *The Quixotes*. 847. Frank Victor Dawes: *Inheritance*. 847. James Buchan: *A Portrait of Rich Women*. Sebastian Faulks: *A Trick of the Light*. 848. Robert Plunkett: *My Search for Warren Harding*. Aun Nitzke: *Windowlight*. Valerie Miner: *Whiter's Edge*. 848.

Richard H. Francis: *The Whispering Gallery*. 848. Indira Mahalinga: *The Club*. 849. William F. Buckley: *The Story of Henri Tud*. 849. Jonathan Meades: *Fifty English*. 849. Daphne Bennett: *Margot*. Jane Abdy and Charlotte Gere: *The Soule*. 850. Howard and Peter Coombs (Editors): *John Skinner - Journal of a Somerset rector 1803-1834*. 850. Jessica Mitford: *Paces of Philip - A memoir of Philip Toynbee*. 850. Chrysoula Kambou: *Walter Benjamin in Exile*. Christoph Hering: *Die Rekonstruktion der Revolution*. 851. Oordon Nagel: *The Structure of Experience*. 851. Campbell Grant: *The Rock Art of the North American Indians*. Mary Leakey: *Africa's Vanishing Art - The rock paintings of Tanzania*. J. David Lewis-Williams: *The Rock Art of Southern Africa*. A. R. Willcox: *The Rock Art of Africa*. 852.

J. J. Brody, Catherine J. Scott, Steven A. LeBlanc and Tony Berard: *Minerva Pottery - Ancient art of the American Southwest*. Steven A. LeBlanc: *The Minerva People*. 853. Richard A. Diehl: *Tula - The Toltec capital of Ancient Mexico*. Raymond B. Hames and William T. Vickers (Editors): *Adaptive Responses of Native Amazonians*. Emilio F. Moran (Editor): *The Dilemma of Amazonian Development*. Jean A. Jackson: *The Fish People - Linguistic exogamy and Tuhuan identity in northwest Amazonia*. 853. Rosalind Wright: *Cut Stones and Crossroads*. 853. Helen Nicoll and Jan Plekowsky: *Out of School. Moby in the Fog*. Susan Dickinson (Editor): *The Restless Ghost*. 854. Kit Wright: *Poems for 9-Year-Olds and Under*. 854. John Rowe Townsend: *Cloudy Bright*. 854. Among this week's contributors.

Index of books reviewed. 855. Oystery Hallman: *Nicholas Kils*. 856. Richard Dalby: *Brian Stoker - A bibliography of first editions*. St John's Oate, Clerkenwell, the present home of the *TLS* and in the eighteenth century, for fifty years the home of the *General Magazine*; this watercolour by J. C. Buckler (1809) is reproduced from the catalogue (144 pp. £6.50, 0 7287 0407 2) of the Arts Council Samuel Johnson bicentenary exhibition, Samuel Johnson 1709-1795, which will be open at 105 Piccadilly, London W1A 3QB.

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The Caribbean underbelly

Laurence Whitehead

ANTHONY PAYNE, PAUL SUTTON and TONY THORNDIKE

Grenada: Revolution and Invasion
233pp. Croom Helm. £17.95.
0 7099 2080 6

HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY

Grenada: Revolution, invasion and aftermath
258pp. Sphere Books with the Observer.
Paperback, £2.95.

0 7221 6561 7

BRUCE J. CALDER

The Impact of Intervention: The Dominican Republic during the U.S. Occupation of 1916-1924

334pp. Austin: University of Texas Press
(distributed in the UK by International Book Distributors). £22.50.

0 292 73830 7

The American invasion of Grenada, last October, dramatized some of the great ideological issues that have dominated international politics since the war. Here in a small-scale military of 1945, was the US military once again liberating an oppressed people. Or, here once more were the US Marines imposing dollar imperialism on the Caribbean just as they had in the days of Teddy Roosevelt. Was the Grenada Revolution a beacon of hope for the Third World, facing overwhelming odds because of its vulnerable location in President Reagan's backyard; or a dangerous precedent that threatened the fragile constitutional structures of the Commonwealth Caribbean?

The fragile finale of the New Jewel Movement raised yet again such fundamental problems as the limits to sovereignty in small states, and the "question of democracy" in revolutionary régimes. Why did the Grenada Revolution auto-destruct? Were the external pressures unbearable, was the strategy of the ruling New Jewel Movement inherently flawed, or were purely personal and accidental factors to blame? Good answers to such questions require a knowledge of local history and psychology that is hard to come by, yet the answers are far from being of purely local interest. "Small places can throw up big principles". The two books on Grenada help to provide well-grounded assessments, although they are each in their different ways the part truths of outsiders whose local knowledge is rich but incomplete. The more scholarly and well-documented contribution comes from

Anthony Payne, Paul Sutton and Tony Thorn-dike, although they are not always sufficiently critical of the revolutionary theories that helped create the disaster. Hugh O'Shaughnessy writes vividly as a journalist who was in the right place at the right time, and he lays the blame squarely on a "fanatical Leninist clique". (Curiously the strongest support for his position comes from Fidel Castro, whose eloquent denunciation of the "Pol Pot Group" in Grenada manages to portray them as "objectively" serving the aims of US imperialism.)

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Coard and his associates may soon face trial for the murder of the seven party leaders on October 19 of last year, so perhaps some specific questions of responsibility will be clarified shortly. However, there is already enough evidence in these books for a provisional judgment of the broader political issues. By September 1983 it was the clear intention of the OREL group to purge the old JEWEL faction, if possible by political means but if necessary by whatever means the survival of the revolution might require. Perhaps Bishop should have steered himself to purge his enemies before he himself was purged, but apart from one characteristically rhetorical quote on the penultimate day ("Boy dem men tough as hell and I just as tough, we go aoe") there is no evidence that he was ready for such extremes. The signs are that under immense pressure he dithered, accepted self-criticism, betrayed his own bodyguard and let power slip from his hands. On the final day he might have sought Cuban assistance, but instead he distributed some arms to his followers and then, when the other side used armoured cars, he surrendered and went unresistingly to his death. The Central Committee's verdict on his leadership skills seems all too just. Indignation at the ruthlessness and cynicism of his executioners should not obscure the very real problem confronting them. Revolutionaries face serious difficulties, if their cause requires a leader but the man who has assumed that role lacks some minimum qualities of consistency and resolution. In this (very special) sense one can accept Payne, Sutton and Thorn-dike's conclusion that the Coard faction was "sucked into" an uncontrollable situation. From a moral or legal standpoint, of course, there can be no parity of innocence if only one side was preparing to eliminate the other.

own fatal equivocation contributed largely to this tragedy, a fact that his death cannot conceal.

The OREL faction had the opposite vices. They were narrow, consistent and unpopular. From their standpoint this was revolutionary politics, and all that mattered was whether their action advanced the cause of the revolution. But judged strictly from their own standpoint they were guilty of the most catastrophic miscalculation. It required great dogmatism to believe that the revolution was in such danger as to necessitate a purge on this scale. Moreover it showed an extraordinary blindness to the realities of domestic and international power to imagine that the revolution could be consolidated once Bishop had been somehow removed from the helm. What, then, did these self-professed Leninists imagine they were doing? A speech by Coard to the Central Committee on September 23, 1983, reveals the key calculation made by his faction. Reviewing a drastic series of measures to tighten party discipline and to deepen the revolution he concluded that "the standards we are aiming for are out of harmony with the level of development of the productive forces of our country but because of the existence of world socialism and the links that are developing with world socialism, this is possible" (my italics). It is just possible that Moscow gave some encouragement to this view. Havana almost certainly did not (unless the Cuban Ambassador completely misjudged his brief). In the real world, the only chance of guaranteeing more socialist bloc support was if the NJM leadership could somehow make the best of Bishop. By executing him they guaranteed their international, as well as domestic, isolation. Popular language ("no Bishop, no revolution") expressed a simple ineluctable truth that the Central Committee refused to see.

Respect for national sovereignty cannot be

entirely divorced from the "question of democracy", as the Grenadan experience makes clear. In these days before the invasion, the Revolutionary Military Council committed the *reductio ad absurdum* of claiming unlimited sovereignty for a dictatorship that was entirely lacking in domestic legitimacy. O'Shaughnessy sidesteps this issue by assuming that "sooner or later" the people of Grenada would somehow have overthrown General Austin and his colleagues if President Reagan had not done so for them. But having executed Bishop how could the RMC ever afford either to relinquish power or to share it? Payne quotes a prediction that in the absence of an invasion there would have been "civil war between the RMC and the masses", but of course the RMC had the firepower. Thus, last October the people of Grenada really faced a very stark choice. Unless the People's Revolutionary Army was defeated (something that only massive external force was likely to achieve) there was a real prospect of "red terror". Here, too, popular opinion in Grenada was surely well founded, more so than these external observers seem to recognize. Not surprisingly, then, if many greeted the Marines as their saviours.

Most discussion of Grenada has dwelt less on the power struggle within the NJM (so well documented here) than on the implications of the American decision to invade, and to precipitate a clash with the resident Cubans (mostly construction workers under orders not to fire unless themselves attacked). Both books take a similar (very critical) view of the Reagan administration's motives and pretexts for the invasion, and express varying degrees of foreboding about the prospects for Grenada under American protection. The record makes clear that American policy was indeed the culmination of a long process of harassment, that it lacked a sound legal basis, that it was presented to the American people in a dishonest manner

and that despite all this it was a clear-cut success for the White House. Moreover, an intelligent US administration would now seize the opportunity to confound its critics about the long-term consequences for Grenadan sovereignty and self-respect, by withdrawing and leaving behind a fully functioning democracy. The verdict on that remains open, but there is already quite a contrast between the present US presence in Grenada and the more classical experiences of "Dollar Diplomacy" that characterized the Caribbean in the early twentieth century.

Bruce J. Calder's well-researched account of the occupation of the Dominican Republic by US Marines between 1916 and 1924 serves to highlight these differences. In 1916 every island in the Caribbean was under colonial rule except Cuba, and even there a contingent of several thousand Marines was in place, with power to censor the Cuban press and in practice to determine which party would hold office in Havana. Before 1916 the Dominican Republic had more "sovereignty" than anywhere else, and yet since 1905 its finances had been administered by a Customs Receiver appointed by the President of the USA. The nationalism of the Dominican elite was of a supine variety, and there was no shortage of "compradors" willing to fit in with Washington's requirements in return for some degree of local autonomy. The US occupation took place shortly before America's entry into the First World War, and in part reflected a genuine strategic need to secure the Caribbean from German influence (Calder could have said more on this score). The Marines (few of whom could speak Spanish) established a straightforward military dictatorship, with army officers serving as ministers and governors, with foreign judges administering martial law, with press censorship and the training of a network of spies. After eight years opera-

ting this explicitly colonial and anti-democratic régime (including six years engaged in so-called "anti-bandit" operations that amounted to a rural counter-insurgency campaign) the Marines withdrew, leaving a long totalitarian dictatorship established in the person of Generalissimo Rafael L. Trujillo, almost every point the contrasts with contemporary Grenada seem likely to prove less striking than the similarities.

Culder has interesting and significant things to say about the financial and administrative issues that confronted the occupying force, and about the bureaucratic infighting that characterized the American administration. With the ending of the First World War, control over the republic gradually shifted to the US Department of the Navy back to the State Department, but not without some struggles along the way. This experience has comparison with other prolonged US occupations such as the Philippines, Germany, Japan and Korea, rather than with the experience in Grenada. However, there is at least one respect in which the Dominican, Grenadan cases do bear comparison, and may be the only respect that matters when politicians are concerned. After six years' military occupation of the Dominican Republic and "bandit suppression", the 3,000 force of Marines had lost only thirteen and forty wounded. In 1983 six thousand Marines were needed to occupy an island of one-tenth the population, and although Grenadan will to resist was at its lowest and the Cubans were under orders not to be unless attacked, in just four days the Marines suffered eighteen dead and one hundred thirteen wounded. They were lucky that figures were not far worse, as they certainly would now be in the event of Marine landings in some other arena of the Caribbean.

their fiery words, weighing the dreams of world revolution which some of their rhetoric against the pragmatic calculating and rather circumspect policies which they pursue in practice. At the same time, nor to signal our determination to them would be to precipitate the kind of aggression we all fear.

The one jarring note in this book – but a quite a serious one – is set by the title. It is the weary condescension of the Westerners towards the Russians, an attitude by which the slans themselves are (in my view justifiably) irritated. "Putting up with the Soviet leadership that might be an appropriate title, so does one have to 'put up with' the people produced Postmodernism and 'Solzhenitsyn' Perhaps it was just a lapse of the pen, but certainly the sentiment it conveys is confirmed by the one real lapse of taste and judgement in the book – a reference to the 'mumbo-jumbo' of the Soviet authorities in the 'dox priesthood'." He even admits to a feeling of sympathy with the Soviet authorities in the campaign against this "mumbo-jumbo".

Of course, many of us, whether believers or not, have our problems with the full-blown Orthodox liturgy, but I do not see that on any other grounds we have any right to be so down on the Russians. If anything the opposite is true. By their experiences in the twentieth century, and by their proven capacity through their best writers – to learn from the experiences what is truly important in life and to communicate it to others, the Russians can command our profound respect. It is something which Crankshaw himself acknowledges. And it is not least – though only – Orthodox believers who have made the preservation of humane values possible.

This defect apart, the rest of the book is a very important one. Politicians who view a very superficial advice, should read it constantly. And even Soviet specialists should read it. It is a book that should be read by all. In his downright observations, Crankshaw insists that we study the Soviet leaders, not only to learn from them, but to understand the world as it is.

The Communist régime he describes, by contrast, is to words worthy of Reagan at his most rhetorical, as "even more vile than it is possible for anyone who has not experienced it to imagine". But – and perhaps this is the most important point of all – the fact that a régime is wicked does not mean that it necessarily has either the power or the will to impose its intentions on everyone. Resisting the Nazi parallel, Crankshaw insists that we study the Soviet leaders, not only to learn from them, but to understand the world as it is.

The Pygmalion touch

Patricia Craig

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE
The Collected Letters
Volume 2: 1907–1909
Edited by Ann Saddlemyer
270pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25.
0198126891

The first volume of Synge's letters, published last year, brought us up to the middle of 1907, taking in the *Playboy* commotion and the engagement of Molly Allgood as an actress with the Abbey Theatre Company; the second continues with communications to Lady Gregory concerning theatre business, and with incessant notes to Molly, requiring affection and attention from her, in return for the playwright's rather daunting devotion: "You'll be coming home to me in 10 days now, and then we'll be together all ways my dear love."

It was wishful thinking, Molly's flibbertigibbet ways, which probably attracted Synge in the first place, soon came to cause him a lot of distress. When she didn't comply with his demand for a daily communication, he would fly into a paddy and tax her with thoughtlessness or worse. In the letters to Molly from mid-1907, we can detect the playwright's anxiety not to cast himself in a perpetually admonitory role, as well as the sense of grievance that keeps bursting through: "I get sad for the want of a little sympathetic line that wouldn't take you a minute." He writes crossly and then adds, "Don't for a moment get it into your head that I am writing crossly my poor dear heart... You are my whole life." Exactly, one would have thought, a tone guaranteed to repel a spirited Dublin girl, and an acclaimed actress to boot; but Molly, in spite of the odd gesture of rebellion, seems to have gone along with Synge's assumption about the exalted nature of their association. However, through carelessness or some other defect, she frequently fails to keep him informed of her changes of address when the Company goes on tour, arousing in him a frenzy of exasperation: "You do not tell what hour you leave tomorrow or where I am to write." He imagines his letters, with their crotchety lamentations and whimsical endearments, falling into the wrong hands and causing a great outburst of laughter among Post Office staff.

Synge, ill and elderly in comparison with Molly (he died at thirty-seven), had a great dread that the relationship might provoke ribald speculations; he preferred, almost to the point of morbidity, to keep his personal affairs away from the limelight. Unfortunately it wasn't long before the Abbey Theatre crowd got wind of the romance. Gossip and disapprobation ensued. Yeats and Lady Gregory considered it unbecoming in a director to carry on with a member of the Company. Miss Horniman, the theosophist friend of Yeats who became the theatre's first benefactress, also looked askance at the besotted pair. But nothing, neither the opposition of others nor their own incompatibilities of temperament, seriously interfered with the alliance between Molly and Synge. It took quarrelling, misunderstandings and the quails of Synge's family in its stride. Its high spots occurred in the Wicklow Hills, where the couple put in a good deal of walking whenever the weather wasn't against them: "Do not come of course if it is wet."

Synge had spent the early part of 1907 felling off of puritan Ireland, which, as ever, took great exception to his view of life in the wilder countryside. (The editor of *Shin Féin*, apropos of *In The Shadow of the Glen*, had contended that Irishmen were the most virtuous in the world, and attributed a degenerate outlook to anyone who thought otherwise. And even if it wasn't so, it was no laughing matter. Outrage, he felt, was the proper response to a work which treated 'women's frailty' as a fit subject for levity.) The story of the *Playboy* riots is well known; and Synge's attitude to the business wasn't calculated to appease nationalist affront: "I don't care a rap." Here we have an instance to adapt Brendan Behan's aphorism, of an Anglo-Irish Protestant riding a 'high horse'.

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plores the fact that only "our unintellectual work, L. Gregory's etc" is suitable for production in the small Irish towns where the Company is appearing, and in which, we may take it, an atmosphere inimical to the appreciation of the truths about the Irish psyche prevailed. It was always Synge's concern to get such truths expressed in his writings, even if it meant constructing an imaginary dialect when straightforward English proved inadequate to the purpose. He knew a thing or two about Irish styles of exuberance and bravado; still, it is possible to find his dramatic manner displeasing, for reasons unconnected with the philistinism or chauvinism which damned it at the start. You can't take altogether seriously a body of work in which Celtic loquacity gets so rich and out-sized a series of embodiments.

The playwright's own life, as many critics have remarked, was utterly different: rumbustious he certainly wasn't, and display of personal feeling was anathema to him. He admired circumspection in relations between the sexes. We don't, in fact, know to what extent he subscribed to the sexual mores of the time, or whether Molly Allgood's behaviour in the Wicklow Hills at all resembled Molly Bloom's on Howth; indeed information about this crucial relationship is pretty scanty on a number of counts. In the biography written by David H. Greene in collaboration with Synge's nephew Edward Stepmo (1959), Molly gets little more than a walk-on part; she serves merely as the figure to whom Synge, in various letters, addressed a number of his observations. Nothing has survived from Molly's side of the correspondence: what became of her letters after the playwright's death? His biographers fail, too, to mention whether or not she attended his funeral, a point not lacking in interest, surely, in view of the declaration she's supposed to have made in September 1908, which prompted the poem beginning with the lines, "I asked if I got sick and died, would you/ With my black funeral go walking too?" (And why has no one explained the subtitle of Synge's poem, "A Curse"; "To a Sister of an Enemy of the Author's", when Molly was the sister of the person in question?)

In the first batch of letters included in Volume Two, Synge is making a great to-do about Molly's health; some minor disorder had afflicted her reproductive system and the doctor she consulted had recommended rest. When, in defiance of this edict, she proposes to visit Synge in Wicklow, the playwright gets off to her a letter full of the most urgent adjurations: "a long walk at the wrong time might ruin your health forever". Just over a year later, when she is better though not quite cured, and he is considerably worse, he decides once again a meeting is out of the question, as one of them can't walk without disobeying the doctor's orders, and the other can't sit still.

Synge, in spite of the increasingly serious nature of his ailments (no one diagnosed Hodgkin's Disease until it was too late to do anything about it), continued to help to the handling of administrative affairs at the Abbey Theatre, where things weren't running at all smoothly; problems of discipline, conflicting priorities, the need to mollify the Company's producer and the stage manager W. G. Fay, and finally to let him go when he proved intractable, all contributed to a state of disorder, of which we get some intimations in the letters to Lady Gregory and Yeats collected here. At the same time Synge was working on his final play, *Deirdre of the Sorrows* – an idiosyncratic great exception to his view of life in the wilder countryside. (The editor of *Shin Féin*, apropos of *In The Shadow of the Glen*, had contended that Irishmen were the most virtuous in the world, and attributed a degenerate outlook to anyone who thought otherwise. And even if it wasn't so, it was no laughing matter. Outrage, he felt, was the proper response to a work which treated 'women's frailty' as a fit subject for levity.) The story of the *Playboy* riots is well known; and Synge's attitude to the business wasn't calculated to appease nationalist affront: "I don't care a rap." Here we have an instance to adapt Brendan Behan's aphorism, of an Anglo-Irish Protestant riding a 'high horse'.

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D. Travers Smith's backcloth for the 1929 London and Dublin productions of W. B. Yeats's *Fighting the Waves*, reproduced from *Players and the Painted Stage: The theatre of W. B. Yeats* by Karen Dorn (143pp. Harvester, £16.95, 0 7108 0595 0).

corously and avoid the company of "Music Hall artists". He asks her to remember that she is a woman and not a baby. All in all, he could hardly have expressed his most overwhelming feelings in a more jejune way.

The *Collected Letters* could have done with more communications addressed to friends like Stephen McKenna, who elicited from Synge a robust type of self-mockery, as well as some forthright opinions cogently presented; the persona he reserved for Molly wasn't by any means the most attractive at his disposal. Ann Saddlemyer has brought her usual conscientiousness and acumen to the business of assembling and annotating these letters, in which every error of Synge's is produced and every decipherable deletion restored. (Errors not attributable to the playwright include the

heading for the penultimate section which should read "Deirdre of the Sorrows", not "Deirdre".) She can't be held to blame if the letters to Molly appear to take up a disproportionate amount of space. And what of Molly, in the end, and her unattained marriage? We can't help but feel, with Elizabeth Coxhead (*Daughter of Erin*, 1965), that she was well out of it. She had her own tribute to bestow to her lover's memory: a stunning performance in the role of Deirdre. (The play opened at the Abbey Theatre in January 1910, nearly a year after Synge's death.) There's a moment in the last act when she utters the words, "Draw a little back with the squabbling of fools"; Yeats, not always an admirer of Molly's, numbered this among the moments which, he asserted, would haunt him in his death-bed.

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Cabin boy cutlets

David Pannick

A. W. BRIAN SIMPSON

Cannibalism and the Common Law: The story of the tragic last voyage of the Mignonette and the strange legal proceedings to which it gave rise
353pp. University of Chicago Press. £21.25.
0226 759423

In 1884, a yacht, the *Mignonette*, sank on a voyage from England to Australia. The crew of four clambered into an open boat in the South Atlantic nearly 2000 miles from land. They had no fresh water and no food except for two tins of turnips and a turtle caught on the fourth day. On the twentieth day Captain Dudley, with the agreement of the mate, Edwin Stephens, killed the seventeen-year-old cabin boy, Richard Parker, who was very weak through drinking salt water. This was done in order that the three remaining sailors could feed off his flesh and blood and so have a chance of survival. Dudley, Stephens and the other crew member, Ned Brooks, were rescued by a passing ship on the twenty-fourth day. As every law student knows, Dudley and Stephens were in 1884 convicted of murder when a bench of five judges ruled that, in A. W. B. Simpson's words, "one must not kill one's shipmates in order to eat them, however hungry one might be". After being sentenced to death, Dudley and Stephens were reprieved, their sentence being commuted to six months' imprisonment.

The case of Dudley and Stephens is a leading authority on whether necessity is a defence to murder and other offences, and it serves to introduce law students to the peculiarities of legal reasoning. Simpson's interest in the case is much broader. He has made exhaustive inquiries into the characters involved, the circumstances of the offence, the history of cannibalism at sea and in other conditions of peril, the trial and its aftermath. The result is a brilliant work of investigative history which reminds us, in the most entertaining and informative manner, that there is more to cannibalism than the moral imperative, "Eating People is Wrong".

One of the more curious features of the case is, as Simpson laments, that Dudley and Stephens have not become popular heroes or villains. They have, hitherto, been remembered only as names in the law reports, victims of a cruel fate. Simpson adds flesh to the bones. Dudley, it appears, was a devout Christian who celebrated divine service on board the yacht every Sunday. He made efforts to teach the illiterate orphan, Richard Parker, to read. Dudley deserves the status of comic hero which Simpson accords to him. After being rescued, Dudley explained, in a particularly unhappy phrase, that "their hearts were in their mouths". He asked to be allowed to keep a memento of his experience - the penknife with which he had stabbed the cabin boy in the throat. The day after the rescue, Dudley sat on a chamber-pot which broke and lacerated his buttocks, making it impossible for him to sit down during his trial two months later. He died in Australia in 1900 of bubonic plague, his body then being subjected to indignities as distasteful as those which Richard Parker had suffered. As Simpson reveals, law reports do not tell the whole story.

"Killing and eating cabin boys," observes Simpson, "was not a practice likely to recommend itself to Her Majesty's judges." Baron Huddleston, the judge assigned to try the case, was typical in this respect. So anxious was he to ensure the conviction of the defendants, and so concerned to deny the jury an opportunity to acquit them, that he persuaded the jury to adopt the unusual device of entering a "special verdict" stating the facts of the case, concluding that as to whether these facts established the offence of murder "the jurors are ignorant", and leaving it to a court of the Queen's Bench Division to rule on that issue. Simpson clearly establishes the legal impropriety of this devious procedure and the legal absurdities it caused. How could the jury recommend mercy (as it did) before the defendants had been convicted of murder? How could the court sentence the defendants to death (as it did) when the jury had not found them guilty of any offence? The power of a jury to acquit a defendant and to ignore the judge's directions on the

law is, in practice, one of the most effective weapons of the governed against those who govern us. The popularity of Dudley and Stephens and the importance which the legal establishment placed on their conviction made it too dangerous for the judiciary to run the risk of a jury acquittal.

The law reports contain the pompous and supercilious judgment delivered by Lord Chief Justice Coleridge for a bench of five judges to find Dudley and Stephens guilty of murder. The defendants were told that shipwrecked sailors had "the moral necessity, not of the preservation but of the sacrifice of their lives for others, from which in no country, least of all, it is to be hoped, in England, will men ever shrink, as indeed they have not shrunk . . . [I]t is enough in a Christian country to remind ourselves of the Great Example whom we profess to follow". It is reassuring to learn from Simpson's researches that those sentiments did not receive universal acclaim even in the Victorian England of 1884. The *Daily Telegraph* leader writer cynically observed that judges were perhaps not ideally suited to lecture their

fellow human beings on acceptable conduct in conditions of extreme deprivation: "It is a trial of the judicial temper if lunch be too late. . . ."

In the sections of this book which are of least interest - because they are of marginal relevance to the main themes - Simpson shows how Dudley and Stephens were by no means the first, or the last, travellers to resort to cannibalism. Chief Justice Coleridge's simplistic homilies did not deal adequately with the extent of customary cannibalism at sea and elsewhere, but the judicial approach to the moral issues made it unnecessary to do so. The judgment assumes the applicability of the moral imperatives which it asserts. There is no discussion of utilitarian ethics: as another Captain said of a similar incident, the overriding question could be defined as "whether one or all should die?" Nor did the court explain why killing under necessity is less excusable than killing under the physical duress of another or killing in self-defence.

When they arrived back in England after their exploits at sea, Dudley and Stephens were treated by the public as heroes. The

brother of Richard Parker publicly exposed them. This public esteem vanished when they were convicted and sentenced for murder. Law had demonstrated an important reaction with morality by moulding the values of the population. The Home Office then saw now not noted for its compassion its time in commencing the death sentence in terms of imprisonment despite the recommendation of the jury and the judges that the defendants' lives should be spared. The execution thus achieved its purpose: to secure conviction that would influence moral behaviour without imposing too harsh a sentence on the victims of the sorry tale.

Whether the views of the Chief Justice or would deter shipwrecked sailors from one another in order to stay alive is another matter. Simpson's suggestion that "we are to believe in a hortatory function of opinions" is over-optimistic in its derivation of the power of contemporary judges. Analysis of this Victorian tragedy, and its credible judicial response which it provoked, Professor Simpson has struck a rich vein.

scene of crime, were surely right in saying the murderer must have been bloodstained. How then had Parry cleaned himself? Wilkes suggests that he was protected by an oil cape and thigh-length waders, which he borrowed, ostensibly for a fishing trip, before returning. But when did Parry put them on? To arrive on a January night so cold, garbed would surely invite attention. More important, what happened to the blood? The murderer? The cape wasn't left at the scene, it was surely too bulky to be pushed down the grate, and it wasn't in the car. And it should that blood-stained glove have been conveniently left for discovery? Parry may have known that it was damning evidence. Why not stuff it down the grate with the cape? But all this evidence about the oil becomes an irrelevance if we believe, as surely the most likely theory, that Wallace heavily stained mackintosh was used as protection.

And there is, of course, the main objection to the Parry theory. Would a killer ingenuously and far-sighted enough to concoct the oil-through decoy have given no thought to the necessary protective measures during the vital hours immediately after the killing? It is really likely that he would have driven to a garage for washing to a garage where he was known and then virtually confess to murder to a man who had no reason either to like or to fear him? Equally incomprehensible is the subsequent behaviour both of Parry and of the garage proprietor to whom he was confined. Parry, although allegedly in fear of the police, didn't at once go to the police. The garage owner did so only after Wallace had been found guilty. Parry was interviewed by the police but his evidence was curiously dismissed. Conspiracy theories have always had a certain attraction but the fact that the Liverpool police declined to open their files to Wilkes doesn't necessarily mean that they had something to hide and I find unconvincing the plea that they may have contrived or connived at a momentary cover-up.

Wilkes admits that his case is not airtight and he gives a fair hearing to the view of people in North Wales among whom Wilkes lived in his last years and who cannot, that their non-violent, kind and unassuming neighbour could have taken so much as an appalling secret to his grave. Wilkes is too, that he agonized over the moral branding as a murderer a man now dead beyond the protection of the law of which he is a different issue and one which seems to feel as controversial as who killed John F. Kennedy. Wilkes himself, in his introduction, goes no further than to say that the case is "beyond reasonable doubt" - that the evidence against Parry was every bit as strong as the case against Wallace, and in important respects much more damning. This is hardly sufficient, certainly no defence, as he does, that the case was closed.

But it begs as many questions as does the prosecution case against Wallace. The medical experts, however inadequate their work at the

Car incarnadine

P.D. James

ROGER WILKES

Wallace: The final verdict
269pp. The Bodley Head. £8.95.
0370 30571 X

The murder of Julia Wallace on the night of January 20, 1931, has been a source of fascination, speculation and controversy to criminologists, amateur and professional, for over fifty years. It is a murder of contrasts; between the dull, almost grim respectability of the Wallaces and the high tragedy which struck them; between the careful planning of the crime and the crude, barbaric frenzy with which it was carried out. But for the intervention of the Court of Appeal, which quashed Wallace's conviction on the unprecedented grounds that it was unsupported by the evidence, the name of William Herbert Wallace would stand high on the list of those who lie in quicklime behind prison walls and who perpetually remind us of the dangers and potential injustice of the death penalty.

Roger Wilkes's account is the latest of a number devoted to the crime, of which Jonathan Goodman's brilliant study, *The Killing of Julia Wallace*, published in 1969, remains pre-eminent, both for its scholarly examination of the evidence and for its comprehensive description of the place and period. Liverpool in the early 1930s. Mr Goodman acquits Wallace of his wife's murder, largely on an examination of the time schedule. Mr Wilkes, whose book had its beginning in a radio documentary on the case which he made for Liverpool's independent radio station, is also a counsel for the defence. And he is the first writer on the murder to be able to reveal the identity of a suspect whom Goodman actually met but was unable to name, Gordon Parry.

The victim, frail, gentle and reserved, had lived alone with her husband for sixteen years at number 29, Wolverton Street, in Anfield, one of a row of small red-brick houses in an unprepossessing area of Liverpool. The night before she died, her husband, an agent for the Prudential Company, was due to play a chess match at his club at the City Café. Shortly after arrival he was told by the club secretary that a Mr R.M. Qualtrough had telephoned earlier that evening asking for him and had left a message. He was to call at 7.30 next evening at 25, Menlove Gardens East, Mossley Hill to discuss a matter of business. Saying that he knew no one by that name Wallace made a note of the address and asked the best way of getting to Menlove Avenue.

According to his statement to the police, Wallace left home next evening at 6.45pm and travelled by tram to the Menlove Avenue area. There for two hours he persistently and vocally sought the fictional R. M. Qualtrough at a non-existent address. He arrived back at Wolverton Street at 8.45pm but claimed that the front door was secured against him. He went round to the back door but was again unable to

get in. His neighbours then came out from 31 Wolverton Street and, after asking them if they had heard anything suspicious, he found that the kitchen-door opened easily. After searching the upstairs rooms and the kitchen he entered, last of all, the front parlour. There he found his wife's body, the head lying in a pool of blood and brains. Wallace's mackintosh, heavily blood-stained, had been stuffed under her right shoulder. There were no signs of a struggle, an almost complete absence of blood except in the sitting-room, and although a few notes had been taken from a cash-box in the kitchen the apparent burglary had either been bungled or, as the police believed, faked.

One of the fascinating aspects of the case is that nearly all the evidence can point either way depending on one's view of Wallace's guilt. The telephone-call to the chess club was traced to a call box only 400 yards from Wolverton Street. Was this because Wallace himself was "Qualtrough" or because the killer watched him on his way to the club before putting through his call? Wallace was extraordinarily persistent in his enquiries for 'Menlove Gardens East'. Was this part of his plan to establish an alibi, or the natural anxiety of a conscientious agent to find the right address and earn his commission? The police and the neighbour remarked on his coolness and self-possession after the finding of his wife's body. Was this the callous indifference of a murderer or the stoicism of a self-taught philosopher who prided himself on his fortitude and control?

Wilkes's analysis is not the first to point to a mystery suspect but it is the first, not only to name the man, but to set out in detail the evidence against him. Gordon Parry, who was known to the Wallaces, had a criminal record of car stealing and pilfering. He had a grudge against Wallace, who had reported his accounting deficiencies to his employers. He was a man with expensive tastes who was short of money and who would have known where Wallace kept his insurance takings. He was an amateur actor able to disguise his voice. After the killing he claimed at least three different alibis. Most damning of all, he had taken his car into a garage to be thoroughly washed down within hours of the murder. Wilkes succeeded in tracking down, almost on his deathbed, a former garage hand, John Parkes, who was twenty-four at the time of the murder. He described how, at Parry's insistence, he had slugged down the car both inside and out and had found in it a bloodstained glove which Parry had said would have him if the police got hold of it. Parry, who was highly agitated, had also rambled on about a bar which he said he had dropped down a grid outside a doctor's surgery in Priory Road. It is a formidable, indeed a damning indictment and Wilkes presents the result of his detective work with journalistic panache.

But it begs as many questions as does the prosecution case against Wallace. The medical experts, however inadequate their work at the

Transitional assessments

A. H. Halsey

GILLIAN SUTHERLAND

Ability, Merit and Measurement: Mental testing and English education 1880-1940
332pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25.
019 8226322

Gillian Sutherland tells here the story of how contemporary England's grandparents and great-grandparents were processed on their way through childhood towards their offices and positions in adult society. They passed through schools which were acquiring the idea of mental measurement. What we now call post-primary education was evolving, from the end of the nineteenth century, as an apparatus of selection for the minority from the mass of those who were otherwise given "elementary instruction for workmen and servants". It was an age of transition. The relative simplicities of the division of labour and the class structure of classical industrialism were developing towards the complexities of electric power, tertiary economy and expanded administration. New demands for a more differentiated system of education naturally followed.

Shakespeare's brief analysis of the selective process in sixteenth-century England was a metaphor borrowed from the craft of the hedge-cutter. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." In early twentieth-century England the divinity seems to have been the goddess Fortuna, and the rough-hewers were local directors of education and teachers who used, misused, or ignored the new technology of IQ and attainment testing in the eleven-plus examination.

Ooe could be tempted to dismiss the tale either on the grounds that it has all passed into irrelevant history through the development of "secondary education for all" and the comprehensive schools, or because it has been securely incorporated into the wider sociological generalization of a movement from ascription

to "achievement" as a corollary of the complication of the division of labour and of the class and status conflicts in advanced societies. But it would be a pity to miss enjoying a fascinating book on the basis of either of these errors. For our present system of, in effect, selection at sixteen plus cannot be properly understood without the historical background supplied here: and the sociological generalization is shown by this history to be suspect.

There is, in any case, the fun for pre-war children of placing themselves on the map of local education authorities and imagining an alternative personal biography if Fortuna's caprice had given them birth in, say, Northumberland rather than Stockport, to be measured for merit by Godfrey Thomson and the Moray House tests rather than by J.L. Paton, High Master of Manchester Grammar School, who explained to the North of England Education Conference in 1920 how his extended interviews were infinitely superior to any intelligence test. He might ask for a summary of a passage from Addison or Macaulay and, while discussing the response, he would be "gauging from the boy's replies, and specially from the way he speaks and the set of his lips, what his will power is".

As to the sociological trend from ascription to achievement, the factual account challenges earlier writers - notably Olive Banks and Brian Simon. Sutherland shows that Professor Banks went too far in asserting that "by the outbreak of war in 1939 the use of intelligence tests and standardised tests of English and arithmetic with appropriate age allowances had been adopted by almost every local authority". The map of mental measurement in inter-war Britain was in fact a patchwork-quilt of selective methods to various hues of sophistication. Nevertheless, the trend towards systematic selection is certainly there, and in that sense Sutherland makes too much of her correction of inaccuracy in the work of earlier authorities.

In another sense, however, she makes too little of it. Selective examinations did spread

after the First World War to an extent sufficient to lend credibility to Professor Simon's interpretation of the system as one in which "objective" tests justified "the drawing of a line at the requisite point, decided by the number of secondary school places available, and declaring that children below that line had failed to qualify". This Marxist view can be contrasted with Banks's liberal explanation of the trend as "an attempt to ensure the maximum efficiency in the selection of children for the places available". Sutherland's careful reconstruction of the politics and palaver of mental measurement, assessment of ability and educational expansion seems to me to be still more useful as evidence in deciding between those two contending theses. She might in other words have been more sociologically explicit as well as historically industrious. In the event she does not even mention either the classic source of contemporary sociological controversy about education selection - Michael Young's *Rise of the Meritocracy* - or any of the well-known, more recent contributions to the debate.

Yet her evidence illuminates the sources of hitherto interpretations. She traces the ideological origins of the sociologists' term "achievement" (meaning the social allocation of persons to roles by public tests of competence to perform them) to what Keith Hope has aptly described as "the political conception of merit" as it developed in the nineteenth century, urged on by Macaulay and applied to the reform of civil service recruitment. She sketches the adaptations of the concept in the slowly changing context of class and schooling between 1880 and 1940. She then relates merit to ability by following the technical development of psychology from Galton and Binet through Pearson, Spearman, Burt and Thomson, again describing the shifts and innovations in the notions of subnormality and "genius", the normal curve of error, factor analysis, heritability and general intelligence in their historical context rather than with reference to present dis-

pute. Finally she juxtaposes this ideological, intellectual and technical inheritance against the powers and practices of those who, either centrally or locally, politically or administratively, took decisions about the size and shape of secondary schooling and how individual children should be fitted into it.

The uninteresting outcome is further demonstration that there was neither an uninterrupted march of liberal enlightenment towards equality of opportunity by use of impartial science nor a successful subordination of popular ambition to the interests of a purported ruling bourgeois class. The evidence shows, as usual, that these ideologies are simplistic caricatures. They rationalize into false tidiness what in history and reality are the mixed motives and messy inconsistencies of men and members of movements who never fully know the conditions or consequences of their actions.

Yet none of this should be taken to support the false inference that sociology should give way to history in the study of educational selection, or of any other kind of attempt by people to engineer their society. On the contrary, such history is either symbiotic with sociology or it is mindless. What Gillian Sutherland does in the end is to write a brief sociological appraisal of her evidence. It is more interesting than either of the two contending versions of education as class abatement or class reproduction. The English education system was managed by an élite within which political, professional, administrative and status elements vied for power. She explains what happened by elaborating the remark that "altogether it is easier to characterise the elitism of the English educational system as aristocratic rather than meritocratic". I think she is right. In the general picture of how modern European countries have slowly and partially adapted a binary education system (one for the elevated strata and another for "workmen and servants") into a unitary hierarchy, there is a special English exceptionalism. That story has yet to be adequately told by either sociologists or historians.

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Increasingly cosmopolitan

John Gage

HANS K. ROETHEL and JEAN K. BENJAMIN
Kandinsky: Catalogue raisonné of the oil-paintings. Volume Two: 1916-1944
556pp. Philip Wilson. £75.
085667 166 5

The Kandinsky presented in this second, and final, volume of Hans K. Roethel and Jean K. Benjamin's catalogue of the oils is no longer the heroic and isolated pioneer of abstraction of the pre-war Munich years, whose paintings and writings had such resonance throughout Europe; but a painter sensitively and originally responsive to the *milieu* in which he found himself, in Russia during the war and immediately after it, at the Bauhaus during the 1920s and in Paris from 1933. During the whole of this period he was making images of great beauty and refinement, some of which, like "Three Sounds", and "Centre with Accompaniment", now in Paris, are among his finest works; and he continued to do so unflaggingly right up until the time of his death (only two unfinished paintings are included in the catalogue).

The forms and techniques of these works increasingly reflect Kandinsky's awareness of other artists, Rodchenko among the Russian Constructivists, Klee at the Bauhaus, and Arp and Miró in Surrealist Paris. Not that he was in any sense an opportunist; often it took many years for these ideas to filter into his painterly vocabulary, and this is a guarantee of its integrity. Although he had been in Moscow since the end of 1914, it was only in 1920 and 1921, just before the move to Germany, that the edges of his forms began to harden, and his space became more open and less constrained by the edge of the canvas, in a Constructivist way. In Germany, however, the pace of change quickened, and the pictures of 1923 and 1924 already showed a preoccupation with recognizably Bauhaus themes of form and colour. The biomorphic and serial interests of the Paris

period can already be felt in a number of works in the late 1920s: although here, too, there was a strong strand of ideas connecting Kandinsky to his early maturity at Murnau. The increased cosmopolitanism of the post-war years also coincided with the final abandonment of oil-sketching from nature, which, it could be argued, was a considerable loss to art.

This is the sort of pattern which emerges from so well-illustrated a catalogue, which, based as it is on the painter's own handlists, has a good claim to being regarded as complete, at least for the period covered by the present volume. Every work but one is reproduced, sometimes by Kandinsky's handlist notation, where the painting itself is untraced, it will be of great value to dealers and collectors, who, it may be presumed, will be able to afford it; but for the rest of the world, it is the sort of compilation which has given the notion of "catalogue raisonné" a bad name. The blurb makes a point of the time it has been in the making, but it is far from clear that it has been time well-spent. The book suffers from many elementary confusions of classification, of which I shall deal with only two: medium and titles.

This is a catalogue of all the oil-paintings; of works in other media, Roethel has already catalogued the prints, and works in watercolour, tempera and gouache are reserved for separate volumes in the future. Yet many works of the late 1920s and after are rightly described here as being in "mixed media": will they be listed in the future volumes too? The maquettes for the ceramic mural at the *Deutsche Bauausstellung* of 1923, now reconstructed at Artcurial in Paris, are described as in "oil on cardboard"; but they were exhibited in New York last year as gouaches on paper, and rightly so. The entries on this work in general illustrate the carelessness with which this catalogue has been put together: that the reproduction of no 1001 has been printed upside-down can be seen clearly from the installation photograph underneath, and neither the text nor the bibliography refers to Kandinsky's statement about the mural, published in the *Amülicher Katalog und Führer: Deutsche Bauausstellung, Berlin, 1931*, pp 170-1.

Policy with regard to titling seems equally arbitrary. Roethel and Benjamin profess a certain sensitivity towards titles; they wish to retain Kandinsky's own. Yet the paintings done in Russia between 1916 and 1921 are given only German titles, with English and French translations, "for the purpose of simplification", although the painter titled them in Russian. Sometimes the translations (all of which will be found in the index) are misleading: the French translation of no 787, "Drei Klänge", for example, is rendered as "Trois sonorités jaunes", which can hardly be reconciled with the image, and the English "Shaking" is a poor complement to the rather poised work now in the Tate Gallery, which Kandinsky called "Schauken". The painter's "Entassement réglé", for no 1088 is rejected in favour of his wife's far more colourless "Ensemble multicolore", "by which it is generally known".

These are a few of the many errors which undermine the authority of this catalogue. The exiguous notes of provenance give no dates of acquisition - an important factor when assessing the availability of particular works - and the procedure for dating undated works is sometimes bizarre. A glass painting (no 612) is given to 1916 when the letter produced as evidence for this is dated June 1917; no 793 was given to Will Gröbmann in March 1931, "on the occasion of" his first book on Kandinsky - which had been published in 1930. No reasons are given for accepting no 989 as a Kandinsky, and the apparently crucial work, "Start" (no 595 in Kandinsky's own lists), the picture which began his career in Paris, and is referred to in the introduction to Volume 1 of this catalogue, has "escaped" Volume 2 altogether. The "location" given for no 675 is incomplete. These are perhaps no more than details, but they are details we do not expect in a work which claims to be standard. £150 is a very high price to pay for two volumes of what is after all little more than an illustrated list.

Douglas Hall's *Modigliani*, originally published in 1979, has now been revised and reissued (31pp with forty-eight full size colour plates, Phaidon Press. £9.50. 0 7148 2271 X).



Oskar Kokoschka's illustration for *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen* (circa 1908), reproduced from A.G. Lehmann's *The European Heritage: An outline of western culture* (336pp. Phaidon. £19.50. 0 7148 2307 4).

Increasingly contradictory

Dawn Ades

RAMÓN GÓMEZ DE LA SERNA
Dali
238pp, with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Macdonald. £20.
0356 10208 4

Ramón Gómez de la Serna's long-gestated plans for a modest critical biography of Salvador Dali were cut short by his death in 1963. The two men had known each other, though not well, since Dali was an art student in Madrid in the 1920s, and Dali had, apparently, agreed to illustrate the book. He kept his promise, and, never liking any publication on himself to be less than lavish, authorized, in addition to the new ink drawings, the reproduction of full-page colour plates of sixty-eight paintings, plus photographs of himself in his habitat at Port Lligat, and an illustrated interview with Baltasar Porcel sat in the Dali Theatre-Museum in Figueras.

The original Spanish edition of 1977 was conceived as a homage to two stars of twentieth-century Spanish culture, Gómez de la Serna more or less sharing the billing with Dali. But unequal international reputations have led to a total recasting of the foreign editions. Although Gómez de la Serna's name is still on the title page, his text has shrunk proportionately to the scale of an introduction to a large picture-book. Photographs memorabilia concerning him and his collection have largely been jettisoned; the colour plates, rather than being scattered through the essay, have been gathered into a block with notes and a new title ("Art for looking at one's soul") and additions include a chronology of Dali's life, updated in the English edition to cover the scandalous Perpignan exhibition of 1982, at which Dali himself declared a number of works to be fakes, and a sharp note on the Theatre-Museum ("a kitsch" object, both repulsive and gripping..."), both by Eleanora Balrerri. The whole is rounded off with fragments of texts by and about Dali.

Gómez de la Serna's text, although it is not allowed to determine the structure of the book or the choice of illustration, does deserve attention. It falls within his preoccupations as

chronicler of the European avant-garde. Although a prolific novelist, he also wrote numerous biographies of more or less distant artists and writers, and in 1931 published an irreverent account of modern art, *Imágenes*. His mode as a biographer is aphoristic and anecdotal. He eschews chronology, but none the less believed the biographer should also be a historian, and this text is a double defence of Surrealism and of Dali, at whom "evergreen tilts", "One cannot live or think without Surrealism", wrote Gómez de la Serna, and although he has little time for Breton's Marxism, he defends Surrealism against the usurping Existentialists, whom he caricatures as shabby and satanic, indulging in a somewhat absurd but "outrageous tartan shirt of words" he sporting cut.

"The fact is," Dali told Porcel, "Gómez de la Serna did not know me personally very well. But even so there are three or four incidents about my painting in it which no-one else has had...". Perhaps among these we should count his description of Dali's visits to the basement of the Prado, when he played truant from the San Fernando Academy, where some of his strangest paintings in the world were painted, including works by Hieronymus Bosch. A long passage on Bosch ends by suggesting that each is the painter of the sins and temptations of his day, though Dali lacks the "side of punishment".

While he never directly confronts the complex relationship between Dali and Surrealism, an understanding of it underlies Gómez de la Serna's insistence that Dali's lineage, however prehistorically wild and wilful as they may at first appear, must ultimately be explicable. Thus if we establish an association between a painting and a watch, we must think of the drawing of water as minutes coming out of the can, because rejecting any explanation and thereby falling in with the label of vulgarity and the brutality of incomprehensibility.

It is characteristic of this placement of surrealism as crucial to Gómez de la Serna's account of Dali, Dali himself here rejected as practising "a false automatism... a programmed of the unprogrammable", and not one of the great paintings from Dali's first, pre-Surrealist period of 1929-30 is reproduced.

Exploring Russian roots

Simon Karlinsky

BORIS ASAF'YEV
A Book about Stravinsky
Translated by Richard F. French
287pp. UMI Research Press; distributed by Bowker. £37.75.
0 8557 1320 2

Like a number of twentieth-century artists nurtured in Russian culture (one can name Kandinsky, Chagall, Balanchine and Nabokov), Igor Stravinsky was given his full due in the West before his importance was properly recognized in his native country. The spectacular success of *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* in Paris and London was initially greeted by most Russian musicologists with incomprehension or denial. Among the very few Russians to write of Stravinsky with sympathy and understanding at the time when he was still getting his first international recognition was Igor Glebov. This was the pen-name of Boris Vladimirovich Asaf'yev (1888-1949).

Under his real name, Asaf'yev was the composer of large quantities of derivative and forgettable music. His ballets *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* and *The Flames of Paris*, both dating from the early 1930s, survived in the repertoire of Soviet theatres for decades only because the aesthetics of Socialist Realism mandated that kind of melodramatic mediocrity. But, as "Igor Glebov", Asaf'yev was, prior to the early 1930s, one of Russia's most knowledgeable and interesting music critics of this century. Author of numerous fine books and articles on musical theory and on Russian music, Asaf'yev also wrote during the 1920s on contemporary foreign composers, most notably on Alfredo Casella, Alban Berg, Ernst Klenke and the French composers of *les Six*.

A book about Stravinsky, based in part on earlier essays that appeared in periodicals, was published in Leningrad in 1929. It is a detailed survey of Stravinsky's oeuvre up to and including *Oedipus Rex*, *Apollon Musagète* and *The Fairy Kiss*. It is also a volume that belongs to any shelf of basic Stravinskiana. Asaf'yev's enviable erudition enabled him to relate the composer's various periods to the whole gamut of musical history, from ancient and medieval times to Wagner, Debussy, ragtime and jazz. Most importantly, however, Stravinsky is placed in this book within the continuum of his native culture, both in its musical and its literary aspects. Asaf'yev lays bare the roots of Stravinsky's art in the Russian nineteenth-century musical tradition. This, he demonstrates, should include not only Glinka and Tchaikovsky, but several other important figures, often ignored in the West, such as Alexei Verstovskiy, Alexander Dargomyzhsky and Alexander Serov.

Asaf'yev's book appeared at the time when Soviet culture was turning from the internationalism of the first post-revolutionary decade to the chauvinist nationalism that characterized the Stalin years. It was banned a year after publication and it remained out of favour for the next forty or so (it was quietly republished, in a slightly revised version, in 1977). For the rest of his life Boris Asaf'yev kept periodically apologizing in print for having written what is surely one of the best Stravinsky monographs of all time. He went on writing voluminously on musical topics, but the fire and verve that typify his best work deserted him in the 1930s. Instead, we find him producing such conventionally ultra-patriotic books as his biography

of Glinka, a deplorable exercise in rewriting social and musical history, for which he was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1948.

An English translation of *A Book about Stravinsky* has now appeared, half a century after its first publication. The translator, Richard F. French (a professor of music at Yale University), tells us in an introductory note that he undertook rendering Asaf'yev's book into English more than twenty years ago as an aid in learning Russian. Since Asaf'yev's Russian style is highly complex and idiosyncratic, he is hardly the writer to be recommended for beginners. It is all the more amazing that many passages in his Stravinsky book have been conveyed in English with resourcefulness and fidelity. Many, but by no means all. Four years of language study and one year of translating which Professor French mentions in his note simply did not give him (nor could they have given anyone) a command of Russian grammar, idiom and culture that would be equal to this formidable task.

Checking pages at random in the sections on *The Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Mavra* and *Oedipus Rex* revealed constant misreadings. Asaf'yev mentions that the melody of the Berceuse in *The Firebird* is played by a bassoon (which indeed it is). French renders the word for bassoon, *fagot*, as "oboe". The score of *The Rite of Spring*, says Asaf'yev, "has not yet been properly staged". French makes it "has not yet been suitably formulated". Everyone knows that literal fidelity in translation can be a betrayal of the spirit of the text. But what are we to think when French renders the Russian word *gadavila*, "fortune telling", within the space of one page alternately as "revelry", "auguries" and "passage"? On the same page, when Asaf'yev compares the sonority of Stravinsky's orchestra to "festive garments of young peasants [seen on] a village street", French dims the colours considerably by offering us "gay clothing of youngsters on holiday" instead.

Asaf'yev frequently cites the Bible, Pushkin and numerous other Russian poets. French fails to see that these are citations and converts them into pedestrian English which no reader could hope to recognize as biblical or poetic. The very ordinary Russian word for "village priest", *pop*, is invariably read as the "the Pope" (capitalized), creating the impression that pre-revolutionary Russians were Roman Catholic. There are also problems with grammatical gender. Two of the animal characters in *Renard* are the Vixen and Ram. But in English this is reversed to the Fox and Sheep. In the opera *Mavra*, the heroine, Parasha, is in love with a hussar, Vasily, who disguises himself as a female cook named Mavra. When Asaf'yev discusses the significance of Parasha's love, French expands this to "Parasha's love for Mavra", implying either that the hussar bears the female name of Mavra or that Parasha is in love with a woman.

The English version of *A Book about Stravinsky* comes to us from the Russian Music Studies series edited by Malcolm Hamrick Brown and published by the UMI Research Press in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The series has already brought out several important publications on Russian music and announced some others, including Irina Varshavina's excellent book *Stravinsky's Early Ballets*. But unless the editor and the publishers take a more serious interest in the quality of the translations of their future offerings, they will saddle their welcome undertaking with a severe and, on the whole, unnecessary handicap.

FIFTY YEARS ON

The TLS of July 26, 1934, carried a review of *More Pricks than Kicks* by Samuel Beckett. The humour which Mr. Beckett extracts from the trivial and vulgar incidents which make up Beckett's career is largely achieved by bringing to bear on them an elaborate technique of analysis. An implicit effect of satire is obtained by embellishing the commonplace with a wealth of observation, and sometimes erudition, alloted with sudden brusqueness. Beckett is more of a stylist than a character, an opportunity for the exercise of a picturesque prose style. Part of "Draft" is transcribed from an earlier prose piece of Mr. Beckett's which appeared in "Transition" and showed strongly the influence of Mr. Joyce's latest

work - a dangerous model. There is still more than the setting of "Dubliners" to remind us of this writer, but a comparison between the piece in "Transition" and the present book shows how much Mr. Beckett's work has gained from discipline of his verbal gusto. It is still a very uneven book; but there is a definite, fresh talent at work in it; though it is a talent not yet quite sure of itself. The chapter or episode which describes Beckett in hospital, waiting for the doctors to give him "a new lease of apathy", is perfect in its way, and there are few pages not enlivened by Mr. Beckett's gift for apt extravagance. His humour, with its curious blend of colloquialism, conciseness and sophistication, is unlikely to appeal to a large audience.

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YEHOSHAFAT HARKABI

The Bar Kokhba Syndrome: Risk and Realism in International Politics
Translated by Max D. Ticktin

206pp. Rosset Books, 44 Dunbow Drive, Chappaqua, NY 10514. USA. \$15.95. 094064013

AMNON RUBINSTEIN

The Zionist Dream Revisited: From Herzl to Gush Emunim and Back

204pp. Schocken Books, 200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016. \$14.95. 0 8052 3886 7

AMOS OZ

In the Land of Israel

257pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95. 0701139234

AMOS ELON

The Israelis: Founders and Sons
359pp. Penguin. £3.50.

0140224769

In his latest book, *In the Land of Israel*, the novelist Amos Oz taunts right-wing West Bank settlers for their lack of intellectual activity: "And what, in truth, has happened to you in the sphere of spiritual creativity? Why are most of the creative people in the country, heaven help us, 'leftists'?"

Oz and his fellow doves in Israel certainly dominate introspective social and political commentary, a literary genre in which Israelis must lead the world on a per capita basis. These four books are cases in point. All were written by prominent members of the Israeli intellectual establishment. All subscribe to "classic" Labour Zionism, stressing secularism and social reform (what Yehoshafat Harkabi calls a "Zionism of quality") rather than religious redemption and real estate. And all except the reissued Amos Elon book (originally

published in 1971) attack the rightward drift of Israeli society in the past ten to fifteen years.

The most sweeping critique is by Harkabi, a university professor and former chief of military intelligence. Harkabi gained his academic reputation by underlining the depth and intensity of Arab hostility to Israel, but he has also long argued that Arab intransigence does not justify Israeli expansionism. In *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome* he attacks the excesses of Israeli nationalism by way of challenging a sacrosanct national myth: the Bar Kokhba rebellion against Rome in AD 132-35. It was this rebellion, rather than the better-known revolt of 66-70, which led to the destruction of Jewish communal life in Palestine and to 1,800 years "on the margins of history". The memory of Bar Kokhba was consequently repressed and even reviled by Jewish thinkers through the ages, only to be revived by modern Zionism as a symbol of fighting resistance. Better to return, says Harkabi, to the traditional view.

Recounting events of 1,850 years ago may seem a strange way to debate contemporary foreign policy. But Harkabi is didactic, in the best sense of the word; he draws parallels between the "unrealism" of Bar Kokhba and post-1967 Israeli trends. Before 1967, Israel was, in his view, guided by a realistic vision, but the euphoria of the 1967 victory produced a "mythical orientation of unreality", resulting in such delusions as Menachem Begin's assertion, in 1982, that Israel was more important to the security of the United States than the United States was to that of Israel. "The problem", he concludes, "is not Bar Kokhba, rather it is ourselves."

Attacks on national myths are seldom taken kindly. When first published in Israel as a series of newspaper articles and, in 1982, in the Hebrew original of this book, Harkabi's assault on historical zealots triggered the ready anger of their latter-day counterparts. One is tempted to draw another parallel with antiquity: the loneliness of Jeremiah, prophesying the fall of the First Temple, or of Rabbi Johanan Ben Zakai, opposing the revolt which led to the fall of the Second Temple (both are heroes in Harkabi's analysis). Harkabi would no doubt disclaim the status, but in re-affirming the priority of prudence and the things of the spirit over hubris and reliance on temporal power, his work falls into the best of the classic prophetic tradition.

Amnon Rubinstein, a law professor who heads the centrist Shinui party in the Knesset, is less ambitious; he deals merely with the sweep of modern Jewish history. Why, he asks in *The Zionist Dream Revisited*, has Israel's existence led to more, rather than less, anti-Semitism in the world? What happened to the Zionist dream? What went wrong? He answers by first reconstructing the Zionist dream of Theodore Herzl and his contemporaries, who faced the task of "eliciting a national identity out of a religion-dominated civilization". Classic Zionism was secular, rational and universalist; Jews would become "a nation like other nations". In essence, they would seek collective assimilation in the family of nations, rather than either individual assimilation or the perpetuation of Jewish particularism.

Like Harkabi, Rubinstein sees 1967 as the important turning-point in Israeli attitudes. Uniqueness, rather than normalization, became the watchword: Diaspora mentality "was forcefully returning, uninvited, to the house which Zionism built". Instead of becoming a nation like other nations, Israelis began again to see themselves, in the words of Balaam's blessing, as "a people who shall dwell alone". Rubinstein focuses especially on the convergence of religion and nationalism after the 1967 war, as embodied in the efforts of the Gush Emunim ("Bloc of the Faithful") movement to reclaim all of historic Palestine through intensive Jewish settlement. For some, Arabs became the new "Amalekites", whose dispossession from the land had divine sanction. (Early Zionists, though often naive on Arab issues, had never gone this far - nor had religious parties pursued territorial expansion before 1967.)

Is this resurgence of Diaspora thinking inexorable and irreversible? Rubinstein doesn't think so. In his view, Emancipation and the establishment of a Jewish state have created a new permanent reality, undermining the "ghetto-inspired outlook". The future lies with the original secular vision, rather than the religio-national revivalism of the past few years.

Optimism on this score might be shaken, however, by a reading of the Oz book. Oz simply records conversations with some of the more extreme voices in contemporary Israel, providing a vivid illustration of what alarms Harkabi and Rubinstein. Included are not only right-wing religious settlers, but also alienated Sephardim (Jews of non-European origin), disillusioned old-time settlers, despairing Arabs, anti-Zionist religious leaders - and one ultra-nationalist, identified only as "Z", who denounces "that crap about the Jewish monopoly on morality" and announces: "Listen, even today I'm willing to volunteer to do the dirty work for the People of Israel, to kill as many Arabs as it takes, to deport, to expel, to burn, to see that they hate us, to put a torch to the ground under the feet of the Zhids in the Diaspora, so they'll be forced to come running here whining."

Oz does not present a pretty picture, but it is one that anyone concerned with Israel should read. His conversations are by no means representative; that was not his intention. But no one with first-hand exposure to such voices will doubt the accuracy of his account. As Oz ironically notes, some observers charged that Z had to be fictitious, that such a monster was "not possible" - while others wrote to express complete agreement with the monster's opinions.

Amos Elon's study of the generation gap between "founders and sons" was seen as a landmark when published, and attracted considerable attention for its unblinking look at the foibles of the former. It is still unsurpassed as a portrait of the early Zionists, and can be profitably read alongside the corresponding section of the Rubinstein book. But even Elon, one of the leading figures in Israeli journalism, did not foresee the political revolution of the 1970s which made the generation gap almost irrelevant (and a new six-page foreword to this

reissued edition does not fill the gap). The book takes little account either of the rise of the religio-nationalist movement, or of the growing Sephardim influence in Israeli politics. Instead, it demonstrates that as late as 1971 it was still possible to claim that Israeli youth were more dovish than their elders, and to predict that "no liberal-centrist or right-wing opposition is likely to gain power within the foreseeable future".

This raises a question common to all five books: is the liberal intelligentsia in Israel, including mainly to itself? Intellectuals, and Zionist intellectuals in particular, are prone to over-political conflict as a war of ideas. Yet behind recent Israeli political trends, in addition to the demise of realism and resurgence of Diaspora thinking, is a demographic reality central to any analysis of contemporary Israel.

To put it simply, Israel is a nation of refugees. Only a small percentage of its population came committed *a priori* to Labour Zionism's principles of secularism, socialism and territorial compromise. Moreover, about half of the population are refugees, or children of refugees, from Arab countries, having a special affection for the Arabs - or for the Labour Party, which they identify with a privileged elite. (The second chapter of Oz's book gives eloquent expression to this anger.) In these circumstances, the surprise may be that the Labour Party clung to power for so long, until 1977.

What has happened then, from one perspective, is simply the reassertion of human realities. Perhaps the original Zionist aim of doing Jewish history was unrealistic; as Oz says, "perhaps we bit off too much". In any event, in 1977 and in 1981, Sephardim preferred Begin's warm emotionalism and sense of tradition to Labour's cold Western rationalism and liberalism - and they voted two-to-one for the Likud. That in itself explains much of the recent direction of Israeli politics.

Does this mean classic Labour Zionism is doomed? Not necessarily. For one thing, the Israeli election has just shown, the balance between Labour and the Likud is still a very close one. But, more basically, Jewish tradition does not speak with one voice on contemporary issues. This tradition has a strong humanistic and universalist element, which religious right in Israel selectively ignores. Harkabi, in particular, makes extensive use of Jewish sources in arguing against the thinking of Gush Emunim, whose activities are in many ways not consonant with traditional Jewish values (consider the Rabbinical rejection of the Kokhba). The future of classic Labour Zionism may lie in finding and nourishing its roots in Jewish tradition.

In any event, it is testimony to the continuing vitality of Israeli intellectual life that the best critiques of contemporary Zionism come from within. And the best argument that Israeli hawk have is that the kind of soul-searching and self-criticism represented here is unmatched by anything comparable on the Arab side. When the Arab Harkabis and Rubinstein appear, there may finally be room for optimism in the Middle East.

crushing the Helsinki monitors and imprisoning several hundred Christian activists of all denominations.

Martin Gilbert's new book is perhaps the most powerful to have appeared so far to chronicle this period of despair. *The Jews of Hope* - and the title is not entirely ironic - is a series of portraits of some of the leading "refuseniks", who are now more cut off than before from the hope of emigration. Gilbert met many of these men and women during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1983; he has succeeded in catching their mood and their tone of voice.

This is a record of injustice, yet the "hope" of the title is nowhere abandoned. This emerges especially from Gilbert's fascinating account of his tour of the "Jewish places" of Leningrad in the company of Mikhail Belzer, whose unique knowledge is vividly conveyed. Belzer has a whole chapter of Russian history at his fingertips which is systematically excluded from Soviet textbooks: the Jewish con-

tribution made over the years. Belzer narrates his story with warmth and lack of bitterness; he himself is a "refusenik", separated from his wife and son in Israel by Soviet bureaucracy and what seems the state's need to wreak a petty personal vengeance.

Oilbert makes one or two slips in which he otherwise a very reliable book; for example the age at which one may legally receive instruction in religion is eighteen, not sixteen. But *The Jews of Hope* is without doubt a major contribution to the literature of human rights in the Soviet Union.

Discovering Jerusalem, an illustrated account of recent archaeological excavations in the Upper City by Nahman Avigad, has recently been published (270pp. Oxford, Blackwell, £19.50. 0 631 13533 2). First issued in Hebrew in 1980, the volume is intended as a preliminary description of the first ten years of the excavations and incorporates, in addition, material relating to the discoveries of 1980.

Revisionist versions

William V. O'Brien

STEPHEN GREEN

Taking Sides: America's secret relations with a militant Israel 1948-1967

370pp. Faber. £10. 0571132715

DAVID HIRST

The Gun and the Olive Branch: The roots of violence in the Middle East

475pp. Faber. £12.50.

0571180795

Stephen Green begins his "exposé" of US-Israeli relations with the story of an American Air Force attaché whose service in early Israel changed him from a supporter to a critic of the Israelis. No such conversion was apparently necessary for Green. His view of Israel is thoroughly critical. Explorations in US Government archives opened by the Freedom of Information Act only confirmed his convictions. *Taking Sides* is a drastically revisionist version of US-Israeli relations.

Green contends that the widely shared image of Israel as a small, precarious state, surviving with difficulty in a world of hostile Arab enemies, is a myth. He argues that Israel has always been far more powerful militarily than it was reputed to be. It has been, Green insists, Israel's militaristic, expansionist policies that have kept the Middle East in turmoil. When a rare Israeli dove, such as Moshe Sharett or Lev Eshkol, has attempted to derail the Israeli juggernaut, he has been subverted and outflanked by the hawks. Consequently, the possibilities for peace with the Arab states, particularly Egypt, were never pursued in the period from 1948 to 1967. Instead, Israeli hawks conspired to produce wars that would lead to Israeli expansion and hegemony. The Arabs play virtually no part in Green's account, except as victims. The extent to which they actually threatened Israel's security and their amenability to peace based on acceptance of Israel's existence are not seriously analysed.

Green believes that the United States has usually supported Israel uncritically, against true American interests. He finds this discouraging, given the evidence in US government archives that many American officials saw through the "myths" of Israel's image and policies. Eisenhower, the rare exception, cut off aid until the Israelis desisted from a water diversion project contrary to US and UN policies. Eisenhower thus braved the wrath of the American Jewish lobby and its political friends. Green apparently attributes most of the errors of US Middle East policy to Jewish political power. Another source of US motivation, concern over Soviet intentions in the area, is treated with brisk scepticism.

Accordingly, Green asserts: "A strong case can (and will) be made that Eisenhower was the last American President to actually make

US Middle East policy." Projecting his findings beyond the period of the book, Green states that US policy regarding Israel is determined in its "broad outlines" by "Israel and the friends of Israel in America". He makes this assertion as though describing a law of nature, without elaboration as to how and why this came to be.

Green claims that arms have consistently been supplied to Israel in excess of her legitimate needs. He charges that US neglect and/or collusion helped Israel develop a nuclear capability. He asserts that Israeli provocations drove a peaceful Nasser into the Soviet camp and the Suez Crisis. Finally, he condemns the United States for having conspired and collaborated with Israel in its putatively aggressive war in June 1967. The reasoning is grounded on Green's assumptions about Israel's immutably aggressive character. However, in his discussion of the 1967 war Green's arguments become internally inconsistent.

Green quotes Secretary of State Dean Rusk who saw two options for the United States in the 1967 Middle East crisis: first, "unleash" the Israelis; second, seek a peaceful solution through American mediation. Rusk recommended the second. But, Green observes, "There was a third possible course of action open to the administration, and that was to publicly seek to resolve the dispute peacefully while covertly 'unleashing' the Israelis. And this was precisely what happened." "Precisely" is a strong word, requiring clear evidence. What Green submits is somewhat fuzzy evidence of one supposed example of US collusion in the Israeli war effort. He claims that US Air Force reconnaissance aircraft were dispatched to the Negev where they provided Israel with accurate information on the effects of Israeli attacks and the state of enemy forces.

Green then explores the implications of the Israeli attack on the US intelligence-gathering ship Liberty. Here the conspiracy theory becomes confused. Green maintains that US civilian authorities and the Joint Chiefs of Staff knew in advance that the Liberty would be attacked. Nevertheless, they did nothing to defend the Liberty and their efforts to warn the ship and to divert it from its course were frustrated by communications failures. Green does not explain why a co-conspirator could not simply call up the other co-conspirator and request that the ship not be attacked. Moreover, his account of the débacle of communications with the Liberty lends support to the view that the incident was a product of poor communications all round rather than a cold-blooded attack to no evident purpose by one co-conspirator against another. Evidently Green decided to rest his case in an emotional appeal to "Remember the Liberty", for the book concludes abruptly thereafter.

Anticipating criticism, Green states that he is not a Middle East specialist and that his use

of US Government archives is deliberately "selective", in support of "a collection of historical vignettes". He considers the "classical texts" on the subject to be equally, if not more, "selective". These disclaimers are insufficient. Green holds his work out as a scholarly attempt to revise the "myths", created not only by Israel but by the authors of the "classical texts". Such an ambitious undertaking invites scholarly criticism of evidence presented and arguments advanced in support of the author's theses. By scholarly standards, this is a poor book.

The raw material of government archives is just that. One cannot adequately understand the workings of any organization simply by reading its files. In the case of *The Pentagon Papers*, for example, controversy continues over the significance of the various documents and the collection as a whole. At least in that case the collection was assembled and edited by persons with scholarly credentials (eg, Leslie Gelb), following a mandate from Secretary of Defence McNamara to tell the Vietnam story accurately. Stephen Green's previous books were *International Disaster Relief* and *Acts of Nature, Acts of Man*. It is questionable whether he started with the credentials necessary to accomplish his ambitious work of revision.

Further to this point, we have the testimony of Anthony R. Cordesman in his review of *Taking Sides* in the *New York Times* (March 25, 1984). Cordesman, no friend of Israel, is one of the sources referred to on the basis of his views recorded in government files. Cordesman criticizes Green for failing to consult persons involved in the activities described solely on the basis of Green's interpretations of the documents. Moreover, the period discussed is the object of a substantial literature. Green, however, apparently discounts the literature as grounded in Israeli myths.

For those inclined to pursue Green's assault on Israeli myths, David Hirst's *The Gun and the Olive Branch* is a logical companion volume. Green hardly allows the Arabs a role in their own tragedy, so concerned is he with alleged Israeli aggression and American collusion. Hirst, on the other hand, undertakes to describe the total pattern of Arab-Israeli hostilities. This is an important objective. Since the record of the Arab-Israeli conflict is long, complex and sometimes obscure, and since both sides are given to characterizing their own actions as mere reactions to the antecedent aggressions of the other, a good overall history of Arab-Jewish hostile interaction would be a major contribution.

Hirst's book, however, is not such a history. First published in 1977, in this new edition it adds chapters on the Egyptian-Israeli peace, the "Rape of the West Bank", and the war in Lebanon to the unchanged original chapters. Lamenting the pro-Zionist bias of the literature, Hirst considers it "only right and proper

that the balance be redressed, the other side of the story told". Fair enough. However, in the previous paragraph Hirst states that his book "is an attempt to identify... [the internal logic and patterns of Arab-Jewish violence] in a straightforward chronological narrative". He says that "a mere chronicle of the events as they have occurred can lay claim to a certain originality in itself".

Hirst's intention to redress the pro-Zionist balance in the literature has overwhelmed any thought that he had of writing "a mere chronicle of events". Any chronicle must have some underlying conceptual framework, but Hirst's is an exceptionally doctrinaire. He believes that the Zionists have been fated to clash with the Arabs from the time of Herzl. For example, he says that in order to explain what caused the Arabs to attack in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, one would have "to probe deeply into Israel's past, beyond the Six-Day War, beyond even the Rhodes Agreement, and to raise those moral issues which a small minority of Zionists have grappled with since Herzl's days, but which the majority, like Golda Meir, have simply thrust into a presumably guilty subconscious".

Taken literally, the moral issue of Zionism, as seen by Hirst, is whether to admit that it is inherently unjust to the Arabs and should therefore be renounced. His examples of alleged Israeli provocation and aggression against the Arabs seem trivial in comparison with this fundamental judgment of Zionism. He systematically refuses to consider whether Israeli policies with respect to reprisal raids as well as major wars might as readily be explained on grounds of reasonable security considerations as from a consuming desire for military expansion. Is there no justification for measures to deter terrorist incursions? Green's account of Arab grievances could be disputed in the light of Joan Peter's dissection of Arab claims to Palestine in *From Time Immemorial* (New York, 1984). But such discussions would ultimately be irrelevant to Hirst's account; for him, the mere existence of Israel is the fatal original sin.

One factual error is so egregious as to warrant correction here. In his discussion of the Sabra and Chatilla massacres, Hirst refers to "General Aharon Yariv, commander of the Belut area". He means General Amos Yaron. Major General Aharon Yariv (Res), former intelligence chief, negotiator with the Egyptians at Kilometer 101 in 1973, Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, is one of the distinguished Israelis whose career does not support the near-monolithic condemnation of Israeli leadership in *The Gun and the Olive Branch*.

The Nechdim Press (10 West Heath Court, North End Road, London NW11 7RE) have recently published *Pursue Justice: The Administration of Justice in Ancient Israel* by Myer Galinski. The price of the book is £25.

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The dog and the dogged

William Scammell

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Later On
63pp. Anvil Press. £3.95.
0856461032
SHEILA WINGFIELD
Collected Poems 1938-1983
89pp. Enitharmon Press. £8.85 (paperback,
£5.25).
905289730
HARRY GUEST
Lost and Found: Poems 1975-1982
126pp. Anvil Press. £4.95.
0856460893
The Emperor of Outer Space
30pp. Pig Press, 7 Cross View Terrace, Neville's
Cross, Durham, DH1 4JY. £2.90.
090397789

F.T. Prince's laconically titled volume gestures towards a further stage in the pulling down of his vanity. He is a poet of high distinction, so the apparent simplicity of his forms and likings will bear close reading. *Later On* consists of three longish poems on disparate subjects, linked by similarities of form and an elegiac tone of voice. The first, "The Yüan Chên Variations", is based on Arthur Waley's translations of poems by Po Chü-i; "the use I have made of Waley's versions is the best expression I can give of my admiration for his work". It is not an easy poem to paraphrase, and the "burning peace laid bare" of the final stanza is carefully worked for. "One wish, for us / at times to meet again, / I could never kill", says the narrator to his dead friend:

And now when my
old body and soul were best
be numb and sleep,
the thought of you, Wei-
chih is enough to keep
them both from rest.

The bare room and ceiling
were always light
and the clear sky
spread wide and bright...
How calm the feeling—
so one can live and die

Calm, so happiness
and sadness mix here—
so make all things clear—
so, like an elixir
change our awareness!
Yes, I can see it here,
wash, till the ink ran,
what the dull world taught;
too many clever
young men had sought
fortune in Chang-an
and might miss it forever.

The second poem, "His Dog and Pilgrim", tells the story of St. Rock, who went on a pilgrimage to Rome at twenty, accompanied by a dog. The saint falls victim to the plague, whose horrid sores seem emblematic of a sexual wound: "bent and spread / wide his knees: / now what said / within on thigh / finger, thumb / round it pressed / found that guest /

stinking thing / that grows on him, / sweating swelling / like an egg /— I sniffing gingerly / by leg". By stealing food scraps from a local haron the dog keeps his master alive until he is recovered and able to resume his journey. The novelty in all this, as will be clear from the quotation, is that the sprightly narrative, which veers between Skeltonics and a playful dog-English ("I not the dog I was / quondam in day egone"), is given to the dog itself.

The last and most discursive of the three poems is "A Byron-Shelley Conversation", written in a short-lined rhyming stanza of five lines. The two friends, utterly dissimilar yet united in expatriate bad odour, runinate, from some contemporary heaven or vantage point, on their lives and works. "Do we in exile, / whom the Reviews would style / atheists, adulterers, liars and libellers, / still not mend our ways?" asks Byron. He goes on to say that Shelley might as well call on God's name, in which Shelley retorts "God made no flame / in me, unless / in sexual fire, / deep, clearest deep desire." Shelley, who is given the best of the argument, but who is not above a little boasting, moves on to discuss, in appropriately cloudy images, his socio-sexual creed. It comes out sounding awfully Yeatsian: "fountains / that burst in crystal dust / and rise again, must / fall and rise, unwinding / in self-absorbed, self-kindling, / self-singing sweet emotion". In short, "passion is innocence"; the "law" of both poets, as of "old Italy" itself, is "erotic

Preening and glazing

Lachlan Mackinnon

PETER LEVI
The Echoing Green: Three elegies
28pp. Anvil Press Poetry. £1.95.
0856461113
PETER DALE
Too Much of Water: Poems 1976-82
47pp. Agenda Editions, 5 Cranbourne Court,
Albert Bridge Road, London SW11 4PE. £4.
0902400304
ANTHONY HOWELL
Notions of a Mirror: Poems previously
unpublished 1964-1982
56pp. Anvil Press Poetry. £3.50.
0856461040

Peter Levi's *The Echoing Green* begins with a damaging preface which explains that his elegies for friends who died early "must be taken together", elucidates some allusions and tells us that "Anne Pennington is the Christian centre-piece, and Denis Bethall's is a pure elegy...but Colin Macleod is the climax, it expresses unmediated grief and unreconciled anger." This unwillingness to trust the reader is misguided, because its account of the poems bears little relation to their real effect.

The opening of the elegy for Anna Pennington gives a better picture of the poems' strength:

Early awake, a surprise to treetops,

fury". Maybe so. But erotic fury can't be put through the cognitive wringer without becoming yet another abstract counter, and a fairly conical one at that. This particular fish has to be caught *in situ* or not at all. Nevertheless, this is a brave and stimulating book.

Sheila Wingfield's *Collected Poems* carries commendatory quotations from Walter de la Mare, Yeats, Kathleen Raine, Harold Nicolson, Elizabeth Bowen and Christopher Ricks, and a preface by the late G.S. Fraser, in which he argues that the best of her poems are permanent additions to the twentieth-century canon. She was encouraged by John Hayward, and praised also by Herbert Read, who especially liked her long poem "Beat Drum, Beat Heart" (1946). This is an ambitious work poem occasionally reminiscent, in its scope and devices, of David Jones's *In Parenthesis*. Unfortunately the constant references back to other epochs and civilizations have a diffusing rather than a deepening effect on the narrative, and the modernist gestures are little more than mannerisms. Elsewhere the presiding influence is Yeats, whose lines and cadences sound throughout much of the book. Wingfield can be powerfully herself, however, as in "Any Troubled Age": "O cottage field warmed by the breath of sheep / When rain begins to gossip in the hedge, / How many times will woman see / Some man trudging / To the door, and rise, with a broken welcome — / For the whole news has travelled in his eyes."

a million green feathers at tree height:
then on the garden floor the sun let fall
vast playing-cards of shadow and of light.

The shadows shifted, he played on end on;
his game of patience came out in the end,
and struggling shadows drowned in the deep dark,
the windows flamed and died for air one friend.

Each poem opens with rhymed quatrains appropriate to the month of its subject's death and proceeds through the same number of sections in blank and rhymed verse. This traditional formality suits Levi's tone, which is pitched high and rises at one point to a verse sermon, but disguises the poems' true structure, which is essentially symbolist. Recurrences of green and white bind the poems into a "musical" rather than argumentative unity: the model is *Four Quartets*, and like Eliot, Levi is by turns lyrical and scintillating ("Courage to live at all is our one pride"). There are more allusions than the preface states: the potence-playing sun here should probably remind us of the chess-playing nights in Pasternak's "Marburg", and the image of Anne Pennington's having spent her time "as though / a life lived is an hour in a meadow" tactfully adjusts the proverbial wisdom of the earlier poet's "Hamlet". These echoes are fitting to the subject.

But the writing is self-consciously beautiful. In the passage above, the image is overextended: where Pasternak surprises us, Levi moves just too slowly, and the metre requires the repetition of "of" in the fourth line, which feels pedantic rather than necessary. The end of the elegy for Colin Macleod ("I say your likeness is to an old stone: / upright, rainwater, moonstone, alone"), which classes the sequence, has too knowing a dying fall. Though often impressive and moving, the poems are glazed over by old-masterly deliberation.

Traditionalism also marks Peter Dale's work. In "Last Wishes" the poet retreats from the death-bed of his beloved, knowing "the madness that is in your method".

How you will want the snowy impermanence of ash,
your dust, like grass-seed, flung over health-
land,
drifting in apinneys where the boughs clash,
with matted needles taying waste beneath them.
The desire to vanish into the landscape is
"madness".

Ah, settle on some narrower plot, beloved,
among the blond spent grass and lie there;
not in the rain, nor in the wind unloved,
Love, I cannot mourn you everywhere.

"Ah...beloved...Love" are all aspects of a tired courtly diction which Dale over-uses. When we note the controlled ambiguity of "plot" and the evocativeness of "blond spent grass" the disparity of idiom is perplexing. Addressing Yvor Winters, Dale dedicates him-

"Summer is once again / my inability to love", says Harry Guest, and certainly *Later On* plays a larger part in these poems than *Found*. The third of a group of Elegies states the "Reality never gets into the newspapers" and goes on to show us how it might get into a poem: "Wonder is a faculty / many do their utmost to smother in children / but when the pear drops on wet grass and the moon / wags the tide among salt flats, the world / declares magic the way in the silent garden / the figure walking by the tall box-hedge / was not there at the turn in the path." Both Gad and poet have to work a little harder at their magic than the *The Emperor of Outer Space* tells the story of a fifty-year-old poet and his three wives, all of whom have had to take second place to the muse. "Far too many lines / and images that do not work", accuses Wife Number Three. "The Whole / however scrupulously free from dust and plagiarism" replicates the poet, at which he might refer his accuser to the Elegy quoted above, and to "A Lane Near Upton" and "Hand" in the first few pages of *Lost and Found*, which take their bearings from Elia, Edward Thoms and Hughes respectively. The narrative generates some moments of focus and power, but is pervaded by static Romantic notions of how art and artists function. "You poems / limp to the page and mar what you have seen", says one of Guest's more energetic lines, showing that he is alive to the difficulties of this confessional enterprise.

self to making "no spell by feeling's fluke as mind's inertia", using an "almost foreign language" and weaving "your myth at ease against all jargons, / here in this study like nuclear dread", an image which picks up the start of the poem. "Parlance" is "almost too light", but has a tricky, preening air.

Dale's conception of his own talent led him to construct a "parlance" which has to do with the living language, everything with literature. His emphasis on will means that he tries to go without the pleasures which we often read, the things and scenes remembered and treasured out of context. "Last Wishes" shows how much he could achieve in that direction if he would only let "feeling's fluke" have its head.

Anthony Howell's poems have much more varied subject-matter, but little consistency. The most interesting is "Burglary between Menis", where the hero drowns: Prior to his nap, in fridge had stood / Larded with fish, perhaps, or fowl, / Or marquetry inlaid in maple, / Celery, Corinthian columns / Canestabile, a jug of ale. When he wakes, all is changed:

There in a cabinet brittle door
Frozen upon shelves: menagerie
Of speechless birds, unworldly horses,
Exhausted, haled in clay.
While the graceful strokes of a master's brush
With teflon touches allied the life.
It made him yearn for Persia where
The lions rage in living rock.

Me too. Not at all unstartling, the reader can only be bemused by Howell's language. There is considerable energy here, but it all goes into the surface (*Notions of a Mirror* is in this way at least an apt title). What we see is momentarily surprising, but the poem as a whole is ridiculously hard to follow. At his worst, Howell writes "Obsolescent Cathedral", about a disused station, once "Departure's shrine":

Thirsts in the drought of night have urged
Us gibberers here, who may abuse
No votress but a punch-drunk vendor:
Indisposed, though belaboured, to impart
Plump cartons of oracular milk.

One can see what is going on, but there is no reason for it beyond ostentatious cleverness. In "Loss of a Language", Howell moderates his tone enough to say something and say it well. Otherwise, his poems enact the static that the poem describes: "Dong, bong, dong: / The tongue lurches in a tower."

Oxford University Press has now issued in paperback *The Collected Poems of Tony Guest*, edited by P. J. Kavanagh (284pp. £3.95, 19 21 1963 X) and *The Order of Love* (200pp. £3.95, 19 21 1963 X) and *The Order of Love* (200pp. £3.95, 19 21 1963 X).

The Gorilla Girl

I might have been Linnaeus in another life, or Darwin, even. Who I think I am is Crusoe — asort of Crusoe back to front: a woman up a mountain, with no prospect of the sea, too many people, and the country that I chose a thick familiar green on every side. Perhaps not Crusoe, then. But still, I feel marooned.

Early evening is the best, between the curfew and the darkness with its sudden soundless crash. I rope my tent-flap back and sit outside — a film director in my teak and canvas chair (these last takes take themselves). Above the camp the jungle clamours to begin at once — a torrent poured across the mountain range, and frozen: vast and featureless and always plumed with mist as though it might be bursting into flames, or going out. My guards all think I'm crazy, watching it — I'm not surprised. None of them can understand the miracles I've done, or guess, although they've named me "The Gorilla Girl", what being that might mean. They brought me here for safety, but their safety was a rifle jostling in my back, my lovely look-out post abandoned, someone shouldering my rucksack, and me crouching at the tail-gate of a truck, ridiculous, a chicken cradled under either arm. Soon the revolution's over — some day soon — and then we'll set you free. They told me so the moment we were settled in these foothills — but I've heard them talking since, and know the day their crackpot general reaches us. I'm earmarked as his floozie. If they win, that is.

I'm through with living in the lousy world of men and their ambitions — but I can't escape, not easily, at least. Although I never seemed to be escaping in my time spent on the mountain. There was work, of course, the sort that only zookeepers and scientists might see. I mean, my stack of dew-stained notebooks saying how gorillas live. More than that was something I'm embarrassed to call 'love', but love it was, or what I turned it into. And who wouldn't, crouched for hours on flimsy platforms of lobelia and lichen in the crowns of trees, not moving, hardly breathing, imagining a glimpse was all I'd get? Imagining, but never absolutely sure — and so I started days of prowling down their musky, sopping corridors, fern one minute, celery the next, pursuing them — my shy, suspicious, almost-friends by now — until the moment I had longed for. Which was just a look: not angry, or afraid, but simply curious. I know that everything I say sounds farcical or mad, and yet to meet that gaze, and hold it, squatting by a rhododendron log, one hand tight around a stick of rhubarb, was enough to start the huge, involved machinery of tenderness, and let myself be known for what I am.

As soon as darkness falls, the guards will wave me inwards to my tent. But I won't allow them — I untie the flap, secure it, and turn up the stove as if I wanted peace and nothing else. What happens next is always automatic: in silence, fully clothed, I'll stretch out on my bed and watch the sunset deepen into amber through my canvas, shut my eyes, and wait for sleep to come. For hours before it does I'm hardly here at all: the best of me is buddled in a free-fork taking everything as given — how the stars blaze out from nowhere, how the leaves appear to sizzle in the moony rain — with neither language nor the sense to think of what in fact obsesses me: the razor blades I've hidden in my bible, the chipped revolver struggling in my Kleenex pack.

ANDREW MOTION

Moments in Milan

for Christopher Murray

1

Palazzo di Brera

Ill-lit in the Brero
the glass over Bellini's Pielà
absorbs me in its corpse;
one neat, sealed nail-hole
shot through my chest.

Enveloped by the black
of the Virgin's robe, a guard
dozes over the *Corriere*,
its mirrored headline enfusing
war across the Holy Land

yet away from us a path
risks to an uncashed hamlet,
the only wire
is barbed about His head,
the cable reporter me.

This is no plague Christ,
ribs peeping like laths
through rotten plaster,
the youthful body
clothes and contains me

and in that sensual window
Art opens on the sacred
I may join St. John around Him,
each of us deaf
to the sirens in the street.

2

Cimitero Monumentale

La Scala out-of-season
and the young dancers perfected
into Leonardo's anatomy,

their cross-hatched muscles
so shaded they should end
only with a slow hardening.

every equine curve a monument
for the little theatres, for the frieze
of a proscenium whose gilt has flaked.

Here, an hourglass figure
offers an hourglass on his palm
and taps at a young girl's shoulder

whose modesty's unveiled by a Hag
with furrowed flesh
as if she has lain with Death himself.

Stale air holds the corpse-smell of water
where flowers withered but no one hears
the September leaf-crackle of net

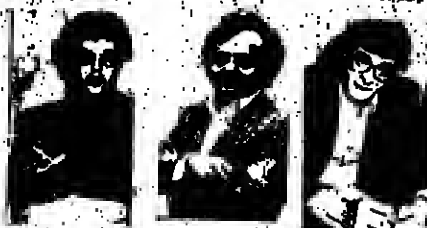
parched in a forgotten trunk
or the distant solitary applanse
of garden shears, its frantic entrechats.

Ah remember the dancers,
so thin, so little to lose
living near to their fine bones.

DAVID SWEETMAN

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Poets Laureate and their work

Claude Rawson

"Being Poet Laureate is considered by some an accolade, by others the kiss of death," said C. Day-Lewis, recently accoladed, in 1968. Dryden, Wordsworth and Tennyson held the office, but so did Eusden, Pye and Austin. Gray and Scott, among others, refused it. The Earl of Dorset, who got the job for Shadwell, would "not pretend to determine how great a poet Shadwell may be", but when Wordsworth and Tennyson accepted the office they could properly feel that it expressed, in Wordsworth's words, "a sense of the national importance of Poetic Literature". Southey, Wordsworth, Day-Lewis had been youthful radicals, and the Laureateship compounded existing suggestions of compromised principle or political apostasy. Leigh Hunt and Swinburne were considered, and William Morris said that as a "sincere republican" he didn't wish to be. After both Wordsworth's death and Tennyson's, influential voices urged abolition. When Massfield died the *Observer* said the Laureateship was an "inadequate honour" for a great poet and "excessive" for a poor one. Others, as Robert Hewison reported in the *TLS* last week, have recently called for changes, making the job more active and limiting its tenure to five years.

The first Poet Laureate was Dryden. His patent, issued in 1670, named Chaucer, Gower, Jonson and Davenant among his predecessors, but this was an *ex post facto* rationalization. Most of the predecessors either had some office without the title, or the title without an office, or title and office separately. Court-bards, like Demodocus in the *Odyssey* or the scop in *Beowulf*, are part of the prehistory. Prominent troubadours attended the learned and cultivated courts of Henry II and Richard I. The first *versificator regis* known to be an official member of the royal household was Henri d'Avanches at the court of Henry III. Like later Laureates, d'Avanches received a stipend and wine and was jeered at by other

poets. The term "laureate" had no official sense in England in relation to poets, though when Chaucer spoke of Petrarch as the "laureat poet" the reference was to Petrarch's famous coronation at Rome in 1341. More often, "laureate" simply meant deserving the laurel. Lydgate called Chaucer "worthy... the laurel to have / Of poetry" and Aescop, Gower, Chaucer and Homer were called "poets laureate" in the fifteenth century. E. K. Broadus, the Laureateship's best historian, says that a more technical sense of "laureate", meaning holder of a bachelor's degree or baccalaureate, played a part. The custom of crowning bachelors with laurel, imported from Paris into Oxford, was not discontinued there until the sixteenth century. Thus when Skelton called himself "poete lawreate" he meant in effect a poet with a degree.

A poet might be called laureate in either sense and also receive a royal pension. Spenser became associated with the Laureateship, but only after that office had come into existence with Dryden. The second edition (1721) of *Athenae Oxonienses* inserts the words "Spencer... was poet laureate to Queen Elizabeth... Samuel Daniel succeeded him, and him Ben Jonson...". Jonson achieved a pension of £100 plus "one Terse of Canary Spanish Wyne yearly", but this carried no official functions. The wine may have become attached to the Laureateship because Jonson was deemed retrospectively to have held the office, though wine had been granted to Henry III's d'Avanches (Chaucer apparently got wine more as an acquirer of the household... than as a poet). Jonson wrote court entertainments and panegyrics, styled himself "King's Poet", and was tantalized by the laureation of poets as sometimes practised in Italy and elsewhere. Davenant succeeded to Jonson's pension, but it was only when Dryden succeeded Davenant that an official Laureateship was created, which redefined the previous ones retrospectively. Dryden's patent specified a pension plus a but of wine. The wine remained attached to the office, with an interruption under James II,

until Henry James Pye, a century later, got it commuted to cash (£27, taxable), losing the value because the King then included it in his £100. Southey wanted to revert to wine but it took Bettjeman to achieve this. The pay remains £100 to this day: in the eighteenth century, the court barber got £170.

Dryden had no formal duties, though he saw it as his business to write in support of the King's causes. His successors, Shindwell and Tate, wrote royal Birthday and New Year Odes, but it was with Rowe, in the new reign of George I, that the formal obligation to furnish two annual Odes was introduced. This seems to have done more than anything else to bring the office into disrepute. Gibbon wanted the "ridiculous custom" abolished. The Lord Chamberlain had offered to remove it when he proposed the Laureateship to Gray in 1757, but Gray refused the office, wishing "somebody may accept it, that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable, or ever had any credit". So the role remained, Whitehead got the job, and all Georgian Laureates wrote odes (Rowe, Eusden, Cibber, Whitehead, Thomas Warton, Pye, Southey). Southey hoped not to "write odes as boys write exercises, at stated times and upon stated subjects", and wished "that upon great public events I might either write or be silent as the spirit moved". George IV eventually ended the custom, and Southey's stipulation forms the basis of subsequent official conceptions of the Laureate's duties. When Wordsworth and Tennyson were offered the post, it was on the terms Southey had held out for.

Wordsworth took office when very old. Tennyson succeeded at the height of his powers and remained for over forty years. He made the Laureateship a national institution and became, as Broadus says, "the poet-interpret of the thought of his age". His death marked the end of an era for the office, and Gladstone was advised to terminate it. "I am told that Mr Swinburne is the best poet in my dominions", said Queen Victoria, but Gladstone thought him morally and politically unsound. Kipling, Morris and even Ruskin ("the poet too in prose") were considered, but after three years Alfred Austin was appointed. He was followed in 1913 by Bridges, a fastidious writer who in particular resisted the temptation to write the cruder kind of patriotic poem in time of war (Kipling, Yeats and Massfield were considered and Hardy was felt out to be "consonant with the laureate mood"). Bridges was followed by Massfield, Day-Lewis and Bettjeman.

The best body of poetry by Laureates in office is Dryden's and Tennyson's, but it is arguable that the Laureateship achieved its greatest poem when Pope made Cibber the hero of the *Dunciad*. Pope wrote when the Laureateship was at the nadir of its reputation, but it says something about its imaginative pull (even at its most negative) that a great poet should have made a Laureate the subject of his richest and most ambitious poem. Cibber erects an altar to Dulness. A folio forms its base,

Quartos, octavos, shape the less'ning pyre;
A twisted Birth-day Ode completes the spire.
The closing image, which is naturally absent from pre-Cibber versions of the *Dunciad*, has been taken to suggest "a fools-cap for George II". But its main force is the weird aggrandisement by which the altar, though "l'censing", lessens upwards until it seems tall as a spire. A massive monumentality overrides the notional diminution at a point where the Laureateship's most degrading function is brought into the picture. Just before, Cibber is shown, "Swearing and supplest", unable to write yet surrounded with the embryos and abortions of "future Ode, and abdicated Play", barren and teeming at once. His writer's block is not of the kind which makes the inability to write poems a subject of great poems, in the manner of Coleridge's "Dejection" or Yeats's "The Circus Animals' Desertion". Cibber's case is lack of talent, not crisis of imagination. Yet even that comes over with a sleazy magnificence. He

gnaw'd his pen, then dash'd it on the ground,
Sinking from thought to thought, a vast profound
Plung'd for his sense, but found no bottom there...

This Miltonizing evocation of a bottomless drop opens up a vast mental void, whose surrounding furniture of monsters, embryos, abortions, invests the supplest Laureate in

his Grub Street garret with internal grandeur out of Brueghel as well as Milton. But he differs in two ways from the proud denizens of later poetical garrets whom Yeats described: "everywhere in Paris and in London men boasted of what the crowd values". First, garrets were hardly honours in Augustan eyes. Like Cibber's supplestness and his willing block, they implied lack of talent, not a proud independence: the divorce from society's esteem reflects incompetence rather than integrity or genius. And yet, secondly and paradoxically, Cibber at the same time holds society's highest official poetical honour. The Laureateship was perhaps most despised at a time when the prevailing cultural ideology did not in principle separate artistic excellence from social success. Royal recognition would seem disreputable to Yeats's garret-poets because it conferred respectability. In Pope's time it was disreputable because the king himself was as unrespectable as any Grub Street hack.

This was no anti-monarchist or populist feeling. It speaks with the lordliest accents. Monarch and scribbler have both become mob, betraying poetry. The philistinism of the early Georges was proverbial. Their reign coincides with the longest unbroken string of undistinguished Laureates, and was more or less coterminous with the obligatory royal odes. In their court-lists, the Poet Laureate appears with the Rat-killer and the Pinnaker. Gray thought the office had "always bumbled the Possessor hitherto (even in an age, when King were somebody)", and Peter Pindar lamented the case of Thomas Warton, whose "Aid grace" was wasted on a philistine court:

He knew not that a Palace hated knowledge,
And deemed it pedantry to spell and write.

Others attacked Warton as a Laureate rather than as a poet. Laureates were despised because the kings were, and the kings were despised for despising poets.

The Laureateship's esteem was thus at its lowest when it was not poetry but kings who were thought low. It is possible that the fall between the Crown and the Laureate is deeper than the technical fact that the poet belongs to the royal household. The best Laureates seem to have emerged at moments when the relation between monarch and poet was one of forced respect, whether in a personal or an institutional sense. This is true of Dryden's (or Jonson's) tenure as of Wordsworth's or Tennyson's. Perhaps Larkin meant something like this when he told the *Paris Review* "Poetry and sovereignty are very primitive things. I like to think of their being united in this way, England." The remark is as far removed from Pope's mandarin loftiness as it is from Eliot's hieratic monarchism. Larkin praised the Laureate for reversing the Eliotic stereotype of the poet as aloof and "difficult" and for proving "like Kipling and Housman before him, that a direct relation with the reading public could be established". Bettjeman is a poet in whom the "popular" and the royal may be seen as not antithetical but converging. His monarchism had a sentimental-popular core, richly and observantly experienced, which may provide the likeliest conditions for the Laureateship to flourish today. It's a rare mixture which, by a miracle of poetic delicacy, speaks (as Larkin's own poems speak) to the more mandarin readership too. Larkin's observation that we are less impatient with Tennyson's "role of public poet, or Laureate" than the Bloomsbury elite was in 1923, may suggest a sense of new possibilities. But is it all too good to be true? The bookmakers have tipped Larkin as 5/4 favourite. And Larkin has recently said "I'm unlikely I shall write any more poems." If both are right, what then?

The Warwickshire sculptor John Leys is to be commissioned by the George Eliot Fellowship to model a statue of George Eliot, which will be erected to the centre of Napton, her birth-place. The statue will be of a seated figure in cold cast-bronze mounted on an inscribed plinth. The Fellowship is launching an appeal to raise the £10,000 needed to complete the project. Enquiries should be made to Mrs Kathleen Adams, 71 Seppings Road, Coventry CV5 8JT; donations should be sent to Mrs Ann Reader, 26 Swan Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

Letters

Civil Liberties in Wartime

Sir, - Bernard Wasserstein in his review (July 6) of Neil Stammers's *Civil Liberties in Britain in the Second World War* accuses the author of "stretching the point more than a little". He may or may not be correct. I haven't read the book. But he then goes on to do rather a lot of stretching himself. In the internment camps of Newmarket, Huyton, Douglas and several in Canada we certainly knew that we weren't in Dachau but I didn't meet anyone who had ambivalent feelings. Everyone resented it bitterly. One met a lot of interesting people and there was plenty of intellectual stimulus. We were also very appreciative of those who, in the best British tradition, protested against the internment of refugees and we were contemptuous of those, unwelcome and self-styled spokesmen for Continental Jews, who claimed that we welcomed internment. But "bitter-sweet story", "ambivalent feelings" and "an enforced but welcome holiday" - at a time when the Nazis were overrunning Europe and when what we wanted most of all was to take an active part in fighting them? Wasserstein must be joking. Or perhaps not. Why otherwise the nasty, unsubstantiated smear of scandal-mongering in unspecified accounts of the internment policy?

H. G. KOENIGSBERGER,
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'The Reality of Communism'

Sir, - I am somewhat at a loss to grasp the relevance of Robert Gorman Davis's comment (Letters, May 11) on my review of Alexander Zinoviev's *The Reality of Communism*. He does not dispute the validity of my criticisms of Zinoviev's contention that the universal victory of Communism is inevitable. But he seems to regard his own predilection for the inevitability of mankind's extinction by a nuclear holocaust as constituting some kind of refutation both of my judgment of Zinoviev's determinism and of my personal political position. I shall not here discuss my political philosophy and my support of the policy of containment of Communist aggression. Mr Davis and others interested will find them developed at length in my recent collection of essays, *Marxism and Beyond*.

I content myself merely with pointing out the questionable nature of Davis's leap from probabilities to inevitabilities. Every reasonable person recognizes that the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world increases the likelihood of an accident or wrong decision. This reinforces the wisdom of a policy of multilateral disarmament and the desirability of the establishment of an international agency that would have a monopoly of nuclear energy which could then be harnessed solely for peaceful purposes. Something like this was put forward by the United States in the Baruch-Lilienthal proposals in the late 1940s, accepted by all nations in the UN but vetoed by the Soviet Union. (Bertrand Russell thought these proposals were so generous that he urged that the Soviet Union be given an ultimatum to accept them.)

In the absence of agreements of this kind the world situation will remain dangerous. None the less that is a far cry from Davis's despairing lament that the chance of an unhappy accident "is so great that it takes us from the probable to the inevitable". Davis's language is here just as bizarre as his excited denunciation, a few years ago, under the title "The Professors Lie", of philosophers who believed in objective truth. (Columbia Forum, Winter 1973.) There may be nuclear mishaps and mistaken decisions. Deploable as they may be, their occurrence does not necessitate human extinction. To his recent book, *Weapons and Hope*, the physicist Freeman Dyson, in criticizing a fellow-hysteric of Davis, writes: "I am unable to imagine any chain of events by which our existing nuclear weapons could destroy mankind and leave no remnant of survivors." Of course, what Dyson cannot imagine is not impossible. But neither, Davis to the contrary, is it certain.

In political affairs, as in all human affairs, our judgments are based on probabilities. Since Davis opposes a defence of the free world based on nuclear deterrence, in effect he

is committed to unilateral disarmament. Has he considered the likelihood that even if the West is absorbed or Finlandized by Communist Russia, Communist China will not forego its nuclear defence? The Committee for the Free World, gratuitously impugned by Davis, rejects the view that our choices are limited to surrender or war, or to use the catch-phrase, being Red or Dead. Those like Mr Davis for whom survival is the be-all and end-all, might reflect that in a world in which Khrushchev threatened Communist China with nuclear weapons, they might become Red and still end up Dead.

SIDNEY HOOK,
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The Defence of Western Europe

Sir, - From Michael Ignatieff's review (June 1) and the correspondence following it, three points begin to emerge:

1) It is no longer sensible to discuss deterrence in terms of threats uttered - "If you do A, I will do X." Instead, it needs discussing in terms of risks perceived - "If I do A, you may (or might) do X." (No government, I think, has made, or implied, a nuclear threat in the form of "If you don't do B, I will do X" since 1969, when the Soviet Union was doing it to China in the context of the Ussuri River dispute.)

It is now nuclear war, as such, which provides the deterrent factor, rather than the other side's nuclear weapons: despite all the volleys of accusation about the other side's preparations for nuclear "warfighting", nuclear weapons are neither side's preferred "other means" with which to continue policy. "Deterrence", in short, has changed its nature in the last ten or fifteen years.

2) Nato has reacted to this by talking about improving its conventional forces and using the "emerging technologies" - all of them non-nuclear - to make actual warfighting "credible" again (a potentially dangerous hope, I believe).

3) The "correlation of forces" continues to be the key to the Soviet "Peace Programme", as it has been since 1961 or 1962. The "Peace Programme" involves so "increasing the economic and military might of the Soviet Union as to secure the victory of socialism without war". Its economic might is proving a lot harder to increase than its military might, but the aim is still the "irreversible" tilting of the correlation of forces as far in favour of the Socialist community as possible, with a subsequent reaping of political and economic benefit. Hence not only the military build-up of the last twenty years (and the more recent build-up of an all-round maritime presence in Western European ports and waters), but also the encouragement of the "Peace Movement" in Western Europe (and, these days, of the miners' strike in Britain): The Finno-Soviet relationship is described as the "ideal" between "states with different social systems".

A few months ago Herr Genscher, the Federal Republic's Foreign Minister, put the problem like this:

The argument that the SS20 and Pershing II missiles are fundamentally different categories of weapons because the Pershing II's can reach the territory of the Superpower while the SS20's can only reach Western Europe and not the United States, shows that we are dealing with completely different views on European security: the Soviet Union evidently lays claim to a higher security status for itself, as a Superpower which runs counter to the demand for equal security for the whole of Europe.

Our problem, I believe, lies in the nature of that "claim to... higher security", which denies, I guess, from the CPSU's interpretation of Marxism's "scientific" and "historic" promises, on which, in turn, the legitimacy of the whole Soviet system rests.

Back, in short, to metaphysics.
ELIZABETH YOUNG,
100 Bayswater Road, London W2.

'Cenchrastus'

Sir, - The monachism David Craig refers to (Periodicals, *Cenchrastus*, July 20) is practical rather than sentimental. He should start by reading *The Spirit of British Administration*. C. H. Sisson, Moorfield Cottage, The Hill, Langport, Somerset.

Bloom's Chocolate

Sir, - Hugh Kenner's account of the restoration of the text of James Joyce's *Ulysses* is as convincing as it is illuminating. But one important question requires further consideration, namely how much did Leopold Bloom pay in 1904 for a cake of Fry's chocolate? a penny or a shilling?

Joyce never corrected the price: "a penny". Kenner follows the editor Hans Walter Gabler in plumping for a shilling, but adds "I do not know how it agrees with 1904 chocolate prices." Well, I was about in 1904, if not very toothful - spare me another four of five years, to 1909 say, for prices changed little in those blessed days, and I can testify to Fry's chocolate bars at one penny or at the most two, especially Fry's Cream Bar, with its deliciously sickly whiteish filling.

The confection was peculiar to Fry, and not available from Cadbury or Rowntree, maybe through lack of vision or design. If, as is likely, Joyce was recalling this memorable delicacy, it would explain his explicit mention of its manufacturer and perhaps, because of its mixed components, his use of the term "cake".

In any case, a shilling bar or cake or whatever of the stuff would have been enormous, and I cannot imagine Bloom lugging it around all day, still less consuming it later at a sitting. I suggest that the typist who thought Bloom must have spent a penny was probably correct.

JACK ELAM,
White Cottage, East Bergholt, Suffolk.

The Political Jesus

Sir, - J. L. Houlden, in his review of *Jesus and the Politics of his Day* (July 6), refers to Jesus' association with tax-collectors, who were collaborators with Rome. He considers this a strong objection to the view that Jesus had any anti-Roman political aims.

There is no reason, however, to suppose that Jesus' attitude towards tax-collectors differed from that of other Jews. The point of Jesus' approach to the tax-collectors was to induce them to repent, and wherever he was successful in this aim, they ceased to be tax-collectors. When Zacchaeus, for example, repented, he said to Jesus, "Here and now, sir, I give half my possessions to charity; and if I have cheated anyone, I am ready to repay him four times over" (Luke, 19:8). The NEB translation here is far superior to that of AV, which misleadingly gives the impression that Zacchaeus is describing his habitual practice, rather than making a declaration abjuring his career of sin and promising to make a huge act of restitution in repentance.

The objection of Jewish society to the tax-collectors was not that they were "ritually unclean", or socially disreputable, but that they were gangsters, who collaborated with the Roman tax-farmers in bleeding their countrymen by violence and menaces. For the methods they used, see Philo's description of their activities in Egypt (*Special Laws*, "Concerning Pits", ch. IV). In all countries where the tax-collectors operated, many citizens were forced into outlawry by their merciless exactions, reinforced by torture, inseparable from the infamous tax-farming system.

Some writers (eg, Norman Perrin) have stated incorrectly that Jesus was unique in envying the possibility of bringing the tax-collectors to repentance. On the contrary, the rabbinic compilation, the Tosefta, considers carefully the modes of repentance open to a tax-collector (Tos BM, 8:26). This rabbinic passage shows some significant parallels to Luke's story of Zacchaeus, since it says that a repentant tax-collector should repay all extorted sums to the victims concerned, but if he cannot find them, he should give an appropriate sum in charity. This double method of restitution is exactly that proposed by Zacchaeus, except that, out of supererogatory zeal, he promises fourfold restitution.

Join the Baptist, however, is represented (Luke, 3:12) as making no demand to the tax-collectors to make restitution, nor to give up their profession. He says merely, "Exact no more than the assessment." This would have resulted in a profit of all for the tax-farmers, so is tantamount to a demand for the abolition of

continued on page 853

Basil Blackwell

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COMMENTARY

Softening the monster's heart

Barbara Wright

The King and Mr Bird
ICA Cinema

Jacques Prévert's spirit and ideas live on in this full-length animated film which opens the ICA children's summer holiday season. Children will love its fierce yet tender defence of freedom against tyranny and conformism, and their parents will want to return to Prévert's poems, which contain much of the genesis of the film.

Prévert and the animation artist and director Paul Grimault started work on it in the 1940s. Being loosely based on the Hans Andersen fairy-tale, it was at first called *The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep*, but the film got taken over and finished by others, and released in a version that Prévert and Grimault repudiated. They later managed to buy back the rights, and worked together until Prévert's death in 1977 to restore their original vision, changing the title to *Le Roi et l'Oiseau*. Grimault completed the film in 1979.

Hans Andersen's rather melancholy, negative story has been modified in important and positive respects. The not-very-wicked satyr has become the totally evil King, and the innocent young lovers, far from succumbing to the Shepherdess's fear of the big wide world and returning to stand on their table until they break, here exult in their freedom. Mr Bird, who is entirely the invention of Prévert and Grimault, has predecessors in many of Prévert's poems. In "Page d'écriture", for instance, the lyre-bird responds to the child's appeal to save him from the autocracy of the classroom; in "Quartier libre", having put a bird on his head instead of his képi, the soldier fails to salute his officer.

Mr Bird, here, is a merry, brash showman, who uses his powers to promote good, independence and fun, and who is the natural enemy of the wicked King. The King lives in what from afar looks like an archetypal fairy-tale castle, but which turns out to be a mechanized, computerized Moloch with dungeons and torture chambers, tax offices, and a lions' den. At the touch of a button he, like Ubu Roi, dispatches those who have displeased him down a trap. His most powerful weapon is a monolithic robot.

Perched on a rooftop at the beginning of their escape from the lustful King, the Chimney Sweep rescues the adventurous one of Mr Bird's four chicks, who is always getting caught in a cage. Like the classic good fairy, Mr Bird tells the lovers to call on him whenever they are in trouble. This they frequently are, and Mr Bird is always on hand to see that they narrowly evade the King's totalitarian forces, which include an army of bowler-batted cops. The young people meet a blind organ-grinder and his friends and inspire them with their description of the beauty of the world, and when they all get thrown into the lions' den, and even Mr

Bird is shackled with a ball and chain, the organ-grinder charms the lions, one of which smashes the ball and chain, and they all go on the prowl after the King.

The film is technically superb, and imbued throughout with typical Prévert non-sequiturs, gaiety, fantasy and invention. It is perhaps simplistic in its depiction of absolute evil and absolute good, although its warnings about human beings becoming conditioned by the machine age are to be taken seriously, underneath all the humour. Mr Bird is a splendid, gaudy character, but the Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep are too insipidly Disneyish by far. The songs are by Joseph Kosma, who set so many of Prévert's poems to music, and the attractive additional music is by Wojciech Kilar. It would be good to lion the film in the original French; this English (American) version of the words often borders on the banal, and is certainly not poetic.

In spite of all the excitement and strife, *The King and Mr Bird* eschews violence; even in the apocalyptic finale, when the robot is pulverizing the castle, the King is not crushed in its fearsome metal claws, he merely gets blown away far up into the sky. The last action of the machine in its death throes is to release Mr Bird's foolish chick from the cage where it has once again got trapped; it would appear that even the monster's heart has been softened. Thus the message of the whole film is affirmed at its end. Prévert expressed that message in "Le Cancre": "Sur le tableau noir du malheur il dessine le visage du bonheur."

The periodicals, 19: ROSC

Bruce Lenman

ALEXANDER FENTO (Editor) with HUGH CHAPMAN and ROSALIND K. MARSHALL
ROSC: Review of Scottish Culture
Number 1, 1984
104pp. John Donald, £5.
085976 1061

The only serious objection to this welcome new publication is its thoroughly confusing title. The editors of ROSC, *Review of Scottish Culture* (the Gaelic acronym relates to "The notion of seeling") are primarily interested in the material aspects of Scotland's social and economic history, or what European scholars often call ethnology. Rosalind Marshall is a luminary of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, so fine art is not excluded, though it is clear that it will be used as a source for social history rather than as a subject in its own right.

Since the editors want to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, they need to cultivate the art of urbane popularization as well as the scholarly standards of the expert. It is altogether fitting that the first issue is devoted to the memory of the late Tom Henderson, who went from being the Convenor of Shetland County Council to being the first Curator of



Maurice Ravel, Nijinsky and Bronislava Nijinska on the balcony of Ravel's house in the avenue Carnot, Paris, photographed by Stravinsky in 1912 and reproduced in A Stravinsky Scrapbook 1940-1971 by Robert Craft (1979, with 298 plates. Thames and Hudson, £16, 0 500 013101).

the new Lerwick Museum. His fine prose style is shown off to advantage in a posthumously published piece on the wreck of a seventeenth-century Dutch East Indiaman, the *Lastdrager*, a bullion carrier which struck the north end of the island of Yell. For the more technically minded there is an article on "Wooden Tumbler Locks in Scotland and Beyond" by A. Fenton and C. Hendry which displays not only an impressive knowledge of its subject, but also an astonishing facility for cross-cultural comparison. A. Sharpe's article on the clay tobacco pipe collection in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland is amusing as well as informative, while Rosalind Marshall's piece on wet nursing in early modern Scotland, though it establishes important points such as the ubiquity of the practice among the better-off, leaves untouched such significant linked questions as the effect of protracted suckling, or the lack of it, on birth intervals. However, that is perhaps a topic suitable for treatment in another article.

The contribution to this volume which tells the reader most about the assumptions underlying the journal is by the Ulsterman R. H. Buchanan, though whimsically titled "Box Beds and Bannocks", it is essentially a reasoned defence of ethnology, or folk studies, as a link with the past, an academic discipline,

and not least as a form of history. Buchanan's article offers a very strong argument for the intrinsic merits of the subject, but in fact the origins of the modern discipline of ethnology are to be sought in Scandinavia.

The founding father of modern folk-life studies was Sigurd Ericson and the first great folk-life park was Skansen in his native Sweden. It is important to grasp why ethnology developed so strongly in Scandinavia. Industrial society there came late - around 1900 - and it threatened the identity of still independent peoples. To preserve Swedish folk ways was to assert Swedish identity in a non-aggressive way. Scotland's industrial revolution came a century earlier, and though the Scots had distinctive urban traditions such as the predilection of tenement housing (to which an article is devoted in this issue), their own national identity was deeply eroded by the time of the First World War. Even their local government structures have been reduced in the last two decades to meaningless charades. The sort of parallels with Swedish cultural developments which Ronald Cant looks for in these pages seem to me to be inherently improbable. Nevertheless, if Scotland has a dreary present, and on current trends a dismal future, it has an interesting past, now largely enshrined in the museums of which ROSC is a lively outgrowth.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 184
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow, and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than August 17. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that, the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.
Entries, marked "Author 184" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on August 24.

1 One Whitsun holiday, when I was an art student in London, I got on my bicycle and left my room in Crom's Hill for my uncle's vicarage in Surrey.
2 He only thinks of making life sane and healthy, and freeing the soul from the trammels of culture. Art seems to him now a malediction. And the Princess Malinè an absurdity of his youth. He rests his hope of humanity on the Bicycle.
3 Have seen the red bicycle leaning on porches and the cancelling out was complete.

Competition No 180
Winner: C. W. Jennings
Answers:

1 By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of yon large pasture will be sketched;
There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend -
William Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, book 2.

2 The morning after his conversation with Major Shuja he instructed the ADC to select opponents for him, mostly from the common soldiers, but also from a cross-section of the officers. "I am keen on wrestling," he lied.
Salman Rushdie, *Shame*, chapter 10.

3 So they wrestled swiftly, rapturously, intense and mindless at last, two essential white figures wrestled into a lighter, closer oneness of struggle, with a strange, octopus-like knitting and fleshing of joints in the subdued light of the room.
D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, chapter 20.

Scottish Fiddle Music in the 18th Century: A musical collection and historical study by David Johnson (257pp, John Donald, £25, 0 85976 068 5) includes the edited texts of ninety pieces, and surveys a century of hitherto unknown Scottish fiddle music, analysing the influence on it of European art-music as well as of

Of loyalty, money and power

Maureen Duffy

APHRA BEHN
The Rover
The Rover
Upstream Theatre
The Lucky Chance
Royal Court Theatre

It is, I suppose, one of life's little ironies that after more than 200 years of neglect and vilification two plays by Aphra Behn should have opened in London within a night of each other: *The Rover*, directed by Peter Stevenson at the Upstream Theatre, and *The Lucky Chance*, directed by Jules Wright for The Women's Playhouse Trust at the Royal Court. It's an irony that Behn, the most conscious of artists, would have enjoyed with "my masculine part the poet in me".

The Rover was first performed in 1677; *The Lucky Chance* in 1686. Both were great successes and remained in the theatrical repertoire until at least 1757 and 1718 respectively, before succumbing to the gush of puritanism that drowned English dramatic writing for over a hundred years. When it receded at the end of the nineteenth century there was a black hole in the history of the theatre with the thin ghosts of Goldsmith and Sheridan twittering on the edge to give us a faint idea of what "Restoration comedy", as we have comprehensively dubbed it, was like. From time to time an attempt is made at rescue by staging *The Way of the World*, *The Country Wife* or *The Beaux' Strategem*. We are offered the fireworks of "wit" and the satire of the comedy of manners but, not surprisingly, find ourselves unsatisfied by such isolated squibs. These two productions should give us a chance not only to assess the work of that seemingly remarkable apparition, a woman playwright, but also to sharpen our focus on English baroque theatre.

The heroines of Aphra Behn's plays derive, as does her concept of comedy, not from Jonson but from Shakespeare, from Rosalind and Beatrice. Their apotheosis is La Nuche, the Spanish courtesan of *The Rover* II, who was again played by Barry. It's an interesting sidelight on the situation which the Women's Playhouse Trust was set up to remedy - too few women playwrights and directors and too few good parts for women - that the characters of Hellena and Lady Fulbank should appear slither, than they are because of the received

The Rover was Behn's most popular play. It was performed at court several times and she wrote a sequel using the same source, *Thomaso* by Thomas Killgrew, which she dedicated to James II, then still Duke of York. Peter Stevenson's production is thoughtful and well paced, even though a little uneasy in the beginning, at least on the evening that I saw it. He has rightly taken as the core of the play the contrast between the love offered to the swash-buckling hero Wilmore by the passionate courtesan, Angelica Bianca, and that of the cool and witty Hellena who, when the play opens, is "destined for a nun".

Wilmore is an insatiable womanizer whose desire is kept on the boil by refusal. As played rumbustiously by Peter Neathey we have no hope at the end of the play that marriage to Hellena will tame him. This is a weakness in the production but one that is echoed in Jules Wright's *The Lucky Chance*, where again the hero, Gayman, played by Alan Rickman, is allowed to be too dominant and upsets the play's balance. The problem isn't in the writing but in finding a theatrical idiom which allows hero and heroine to stand up to each other as vocal equals. The parts of Hellena and Julia were both originally played by, and I suspect conceived for, Elizabeth Barry, Rochester's mistress. Otway's obsessive passion and, although these are comedy roles, a much praised tragedienne.

The heroines of Aphra Behn's plays derive, as does her concept of comedy, not from Jonson but from Shakespeare, from Rosalind and Beatrice. Their apotheosis is La Nuche, the Spanish courtesan of *The Rover* II, who was again played by Barry. It's an interesting sidelight on the situation which the Women's Playhouse Trust was set up to remedy - too few women playwrights and directors and too few good parts for women - that the characters of Hellena and Lady Fulbank should appear slither, than they are because of the received

role of the lusty gallant which has no precise female equivalent.

The Lucky Chance is directed with wit and imagination and should certainly be seen. That said it seems perhaps harsh to cavil and demand even more of a production whose verve and theatricality bowl the audience along without time for reflection. This very success, however, obscures the play's deeper levels, both emotional and political. On the surface it seems quite simply a romp about sex: who is to enjoy whom, how and when. Below this surface metaphor lies the play Behn was almost certainly paid by Whitehall to write, about loyalty, money and power.

Sir Feeble Fainwou'd and Sir Cautious Fulbank have both bought themselves young, beautiful, well-bred wives. The point isn't just that they are old but that they are city fathers, supporters of the Protestant succession and the country party. They embody the Good Old Cause brought up to date, controlling, or attempting to, a Catholic king through the power of money and the city. Their young wives are images of High Tory loyalty with all the qualities of the cultivated upper classes which Behn admired: beauty, wit and generosity. Knights and aldermen, they show themselves to be, not wise but as glibly to simple deceptions as the nation was to the cheats of the Popish Plot and Titus Oates, "the wonderful Salamanca Doctor" referred to early on in the play, "who was both here and there at the same instant of time".

Julia and Leticia have been forced to marry these old men even though they were contracted to the young sparks, Gayman and Belmour. Their primary loyalties and desires have been corrupted by money, which is the real villain of the piece. Gayman, in hiding from destitution in Alsatia, is forced nearly to prostitute himself to his landlady to gain his liberty. The three heroines are sold as Behn herself may have been in her brief marriage to a Ger-

man merchant, an experiment she never repeated - preferring "to write for bread". When Leticia decides to run away before the consummation she invokes a new morality of the heart against convention.

Old man forgive me - thou the Aggressor art
Who rudely forced the hand without the heart.
She cannot from the paths of honour rove
Whose guide's Religion and whose end is Love.

Politics and sex are entwined too in the main plot (which gives the play its subtitle, *An Alderman's Bargain*) where Behn further explores the concept of loyalty. Julia refuses to cuckold Sir Cautious, though freely admitting to him that she loves Gayman. "We cannot help our inclinations. Sir, / No more than time or light for coming on". He, however, is prepared to connive at his own cuckolding in return for money. He betrays the marriage she has honoured and she leaves him while being, at first, equally angry with the lover who has tricked his way into her bed, and made her "a foul Adulteress".

This theme of loyalty was to dominate the nation and Aphra Behn for the last three years of her life, beginning with the Monmouth rebellion which she made the matter of her three-part novel, *Love Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister*, and culminating in her refusal to write an ode in praise of William of Nassau. The power of money too preoccupied her both personally - her last published poem speaks of her "indigence" - and politically. Not to see these concerns through the baroque idiom which embodies them and to call the plot merely "ludicrous", is a failure of historical and aesthetic perception like that which for so long refused to take opera seriously and turns *The Lucky Chance* into the "bold, vulgar study" of the programme note. Ironically Upstream Theatre, with fewer resources, have come closer to Behn's artistic heart than the Women's Playhouse Trust which must follow in her footsteps.

Pact and impact

Simon Berry

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE
Doctor Faustus
Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh

Ian Wooldridge has come to Edinburgh from the touring company of the Glasgow Citizens (Theatre About Glasgow) with a reputation for fanning the embers of repertory reliables. This first production by the Lyceum's new artistic director justifies hopes of an opening spectacular to restore the Lyceum's gilling box office.

On a set draped entirely in black, apart from clusters of incense candles, this production is in the true Citizens mould. Many hallmarks of the Hevelgal-Prowse approach are here: stage action exploding into the auditorium (in this case, up into the cupola above the stalls where the Good and Bad Angels call down to Faustus), breathtaking sets offering entrances at all levels for bold stage effects (here an electric chair is lowered from the fly-tower to hasten Faustus's descent to Hell), and the unabashed manipulation of text and structure to accommodate a highly expressionist style of acting.

Wooldridge's lively treatment of Marlowe's masterpiece has the advantage of a strong central performance by Don Crear. His Faustus starts as a disgruntled academic (nuttily dressed in a contemporary dark suit) whose formidable analytical gifts have not advanced him very far in the departmental hierarchy. Books are discharged as grapeshot in a perpetual battle of wits in the long opening speech where Faustus resolves to "try thy brains to gain a deity". They lie about the stage in mid-den heaps, their usefulness exhausted.

This is a very self-inspecting Faustus who, even when he dons the magician's robes and makes his pact with Lucifer, is aware of every step in his soul's damnation. Crear conveys very well the intellectual crackle that animates Faustus, and we are forced to pity him at the end because his mental rigour allows him no

delusions to shield him from the terror of his self-ordained fate.

The director's confidence has succeeded in assimilating Marlowe's sudden changes of mood and tempo. The clown scenes, reduced to a minimum, come across as genuinely comic. The Seven Deadly Sins, emerging from the trap in an undistinguishable mass of flesh, almost steal the show with their grotesqueries. Tant Dean Burn, in particular, brings out all the pantomime potential of Lechery in a set of bug-coloured woollen combinations.

This version includes the long scene where Mephistophilis and Faustus impersonate two cardinals who recommend the burning of Giordano Bruno, followed by the farcical pranks at the Pope's banquet. Attempted revenge follows the scene where one of Charles V's knights is made to sprout a pair of horns for questioning Faustus's necromantic skill. The aggrieved knight and his sidekicks ambush Faustus, cut off his head and gleefully toss it around the stage like members of the Harlem Globetrotters before Faustus re-emerges to summon his devils. Both scenes come off magnificently.

Billowing smoke, thundering organ chords and wafts of incense intersperse and pervade the play's high points. A memorable effect is produced by the appearance of a gold-plated Helen to provide Faustus's last moments of empty pleasure. At this point it seems a missed opportunity not to have portrayed him as a more recognizable contemporary figure latent on acquiring fame through the magic of wealth rather than knowledge. After all, one need have looked no further for a prime example of a "hellish fall whose fiendish fortune may exhort the wise" than to the modern man who recently drove a Faustian bargain with cocaine smugglers in California.

Information about a symposium on the lives and works of John Gray and André Raffalovich, which will be held at the Dominican Chaplaincy, 25 George Square, Edinburgh on August 2, 3 and 4, may be had from A. W. Campbell, 7 North West Circus Place, Edinburgh EH3 6ST.

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WILLIAMS. MALTBY
Alba: A biography of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Third Duke of Alba 1507-1582
378pp. University of California Press. £22.70.
0520046943

There are very few biographies of the duke of Alba and these all by Spaniards with one, rather light-weight, German effort. To expect one in English or Dutch would be like expecting an Irish biography of Oliver Cromwell or an American one of George III. In general, biographers like to feel at least some sympathy for their subject, and it is not easy to feel sympathy for Alba. Neither of the two rulers whom he served with Hagen-like loyalty, Charles V and Philip II, seem ever to have felt such an emotion towards him. In 1543, when Philip was fifteen, Charles described Alba to him in a secret "instruction". (I have slightly emended William S. Maltby's translation.)

The duke of Alba... does not go according to faction, but by what best serves his own interest. ... I have found as I came to know him that he has great ambitions and tries to advance himself as much as he can, though he piously makes himself out to be very humble and reticent. ... You must guard against placing him or the other grandees very far within the government, because by every way they can, he and the others will try to gain favour that will later cost you dear. ... In everything else I employ the duke In, in matters of state and war, make use of him ... and favour him as he is the best we now have in these kingdoms.

This was a perceptive character-sketch. Alba was the outstanding soldier of his age. Master of both strategy and tactics, he was as conscious as Napoleon that an army marches on its stomach, and as concerned about logistical detail. Unlike Napoleon, he tried to avoid pitched battles unless he had overwhelming tactical superiority, and in those he did fight his own losses were usually minimal. His soldiers appear to have loved him, even if no one else

did. As a political adviser, "in matters of state", he was as coldly logical as in military strategy. In 1544 Charles V, in order to have a lasting peace with France, was proposing to offer either the Netherlands or the duchy of Milan as a dowry for a Habsburg princess in a proposed marriage to the second son of Francis I. To the dismay of the sentimentalists in court, who were horrified by the very thought that the emperor should give up his paternal heritage, Alba argued for keeping the newly-won Milan. The Netherlands could not be defended without northern Italy and especially if their prince was residing elsewhere.

Nothing came of the 1544 proposals; but Alba's appreciation of the difficulty of holding the Netherlands certainly turned out to be correct - in spite of his own efforts, a quarter of a century later. Or was it because of his efforts? Was Charles V right in warning Philip that Alba, while always worth listening to, had faults of character and upbringing which would make it dangerous to let him take charge of government? For this is surely what the emperor meant and this is what Alba's position was in the Netherlands in those crucial years 1567-73.

Philip II did not really mean this to happen, nor had Alba himself wished it. He was reluctantly sent to the Low Countries to punish rebellion and to reassert the king's authority, both in the country itself and in the international affairs of north-western Europe. The plan was that the king himself would follow within

months with a general pardon. It was the classic gambit of a sixteenth-century ruler of which Machiavelli would no doubt have approved: let the prince send a ruthless minister to crush resistance or perpetual resistance, then disavow him and effect a general reconciliation.

In the event, the madness of Don Carlos and the revolt of the Meriscos prevented Philip from leaving Spain. Alba was left in charge with his reputation already tainted. It is possible that a mere flexible politician could have coped. Ten years later, Alexander Farnese, duke of Parma, was to show how this could be done and in circumstances which were even more unpromising. But Alba compounded his difficulties by his rigidity and obstinacy. He clung to his plan of a 10 per cent sales tax, the famous "tenth penny", against the advice of his Netherlands council and, eventually, of the king himself. More and more he came to regard all opposition as the result of heresy and those who disagreed with him as crypto-heretics. As so often in history, an oversimplified view of one's opponents turned potential allies and neutrals into enemies. A sullen but still basically Catholic and loyal population was driven into open rebellion.

Maltby is excellent in explaining Alba's very real problems, problems which until fairly recently have tended to be ignored by historians. Nor does he attempt any whitewash. He acknowledges that Alba's reaction to rebellion was brutal, at times deliberately cruel, and

certainly counter-productive. Alba may have had the laws of war, as then understood, on his side; rebels deserved no mercy at all and towns which refused a summons to surrender could be legitimately plundered after capture. But the atrocities committed by Alba and his troops went beyond the conventions of the time, just as they had done earlier in the duke's Italian campaigns and as they were to do later, although against his will, in Portugal. In the end, Philip II repudiated Alba, but by then it was too late. The Machiavellian moment had been missed.

What we do not get in this book is a discussion of the fundamental early modern problem of establishing absolutism in a country in which government had traditionally been based on consent. Quite evidently, a standing army was not enough; Alba's army had to be paid for and, without a civil service controlled by the central government, there was simply no way of collecting the necessary taxes without the consent of the provincial estates and, ultimately, the virtually self-governing cities. Nor could Alba create such a civil service at short notice, even if he had thought along these lines.

But perhaps such general questions have no place in a biography and Maltby's touch is not altogether certain when he does mention them. As a biography, this book works very well. It is fair-minded, perceptive and dignified - and what more could the Iron Duke have expected?

Rural responsibilities

Henry Kamen

DAVID E. VASSBERG
Land and Society in Golden Age Castile
263pp. Cambridge University Press. £24.
0521254701

Virtually all the social, political and even religious problems of modern Spain can be traced back to the burning question of land-ownership. From the studies made by Campomanes in the eighteenth century and Joaquín Costa in the nineteenth, to the abortive reform programme of the Second Republic in the 1930s, successive reformers and politicians have grappled fruitlessly with an issue to which there appeared to be no easy solution. It is all the more astonishing, then, that the historical literature on the subject has been until recent times non-existent. Non-Spanish historians, with their interest centring perhaps inevitably on political matters rather than on more mundane questions, have disputed over such mysteries as "the decline of Spain" without having at their disposal any information on the agrarian development of Spain.

It is fair to say that we still do not know very much about Spanish agriculture before the end of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, a generation of Spanish scholars, working chiefly through the medium of the journal *Estudios Geográficos*, has recently begun to shed considerable light on what had previously been darkness. David Vassberg has been able to profit by their researches and, aided both by his own farming background and by many months of patient work in the archives, has produced an ambitious and stimulating study that can fairly be described as the first thoroughly reliable work to be written on the agriculture of sixteenth-century Spain. There are, to be sure, two important restrictions: he studies only central Castile, and he deals principally with land-ownership rather than development. But his research, taken in conjunction with the conclusions he borrows from other writers such as García-Fernández and Brumont, offers a solid framework to help us understand the internal history of pre-industrial Spain.

The book is above all a scholarly monograph, and the reader consequently has to try to cope with a large vocabulary of Spanish technical terms. However, Vassberg's easy and fluent style softens the blow, and in any case his careful attempt to define terms such as *ejido* and *monte* is an important contribution to the literature in English. The nature of the subject means that there are no surprises here. The general lines of his exposition confirm ex-

isting knowledge on the division of lands, methods of exploitation, and so on. He discusses noble and Church lands, gives a cautious but judicious summary of the balance between arable and pasture in the century, and judges that wheat yield ratios were five yielded to one sown. There are superb short discussions of the relative merits of oxen and mules in agriculture, and of the arrangements for marketing (a major theme, surely, in search of an author) in the rural economy. Perhaps the most disappointing chapter is the crucial one on peasant land-owning, not because of its content, which is excellent, but because of its inability to arrive at any clear general perspective of the subject; indeed its conclusions offer no significant advance on those first given several years ago in Salomon's analysis of the census of 1575. This seems to suggest that regional studies, such as the one by Brumont on Burebo, offer more scope for firm conclusions than a broad survey which tries to simplify the very complex rural structure of Castile.

Two features in particular I find satisfying. First, the author has short but very good chapters on the role of communalism in agriculture, something I tried to draw attention to in my study of the reign of Charles II. Vassberg has very efficiently collected numerous references to communal practices, and concludes firmly, and I believe justly, that communal agriculture was "a vital part of the fabric of society". He is the first historian to make this claim

so forthrightly, and if he is right then the picture presented in the classic work by Joseph Costo can be shown to be far more widespread than is commonly imagined. It is a pity that Vassberg did not use the important work of Camilo Baroja on *Las pueblas de España*, because he would there have found more explicit evidence for the communal tradition. The author also lays strong emphasis on intercommunal cooperation, and though he is too careful a scholar to make sweeping conclusions about the evidence, there can be little doubt that the communal tradition is a fundamental key to the history of those times. My second satisfaction is that Vassberg has further helped to bury the old image of the Mesta as the cause of the ruin of rural Castile. "Some historians," he writes, "have concluded that early modern Spanish agriculture was ruined by migratory flocks. That is simply not true."

Though Vassberg's study lends heavily on previous research, it is also in many senses a pioneering work, because he has boldly picked out for consideration all those fundamental questions to which answers have seldom been seriously attempted. The nature of research into agrarian history means that answers are reached only slowly, and when reached are seldom startling. Within the covers of his book, none the less, David Vassberg has put together a stimulating, challenging and unquestionably brilliant exposé of the everyday reality of rural Castile.

Mission impossible

C. R. Boxer

HUBERT JACOBS (Editor)
Documenta Malucena III (1606-1682)
766pp. Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute
8870411265

This is the final volume of Fr Hubert Jacobs's exemplary work on the Jesuit Malucena mission, 1542-1682. It contains some 234 documents in the main body of the text, the first of which is dated at Ternate on April 10, 1606, and the last at Manila, June 8, 1682. As the editor points out in his introduction, the mission was virtually moribund for much of this period, being always understaffed, situated at the end of a long and tenuous line of communication, whether from Portuguese Malacca or from Spanish Manila, and subjected to constant harassment by Calvinist Dutch and Muslim Indonesian opponents. The mission was doomed when the Spaniards withdrew

their garrisons from Ternate and Tidore in June 1663, because of a threatened attack on the Philippines by the Ming loyalist leader, Zheng Cheng-gong (known to Europeans as Koxinga), who had wrested Taiwan from the Dutch in 1662. A few Jesuit missionaries were briefly stationed on the island group of Sulu in 1671-77, where two converted Rajas remained astonishingly loyal to them. This outpost was forcibly extinguished when the Dutch East India Company occupied the region in 1677, removing the Spaniards via Batavia to Manila.

There was never any real prospect of evangelizing the Muslim Moluccas, as most of the Jesuits fully realized, although some optimistic writing in April 1606, just after the Spanish reconquest of Ternate and Tidore from the Dutch, outlined that a more numerous Christianity could be formed to the Spice Islands than in Japan. That the Jesuits hung on as long as they did was chiefly due to their relationship with a mission which had been founded by St Francis Xavier himself.

More poet than peasant

John Lucas

ERIC ROBINSON and DAVID POWELL (Editors)
The Later Poems of John Clare: 1837-1864
Volume 1: 664pp. Volume 2: 500pp.
Oxford University Press. £85 the set.
019818740

GEORGE DEACON
John Clare and the Folk Tradition
397pp. Sinclair Browne. £15.
0850010088

John Clare was born in 1793 and died in 1864. *Poems Descriptive Of Rural Life and Scenery*, the first of his volumes to be published during his lifetime, came out in 1820. The last, *The Rural Muse*, was published in 1835. I begin with these facts because they help direct attention to the problems that have always damaged his reputation. His dates alone make him an inconvenient figure for the orthodoxes of literary history. Clare will not fit into accounts of Romanticism or of Victorian poetry. So much the worse for such accounts, you want to think. Unfortunately for Clare, they determine or are determined by publishers' attitudes to what can and cannot be put into print. And these attitudes are in their turn determined by, or determine, lecture programmes and examination syllabuses. For better or worse the vast majority of readers of poetry are students of English Literature; and publishers' lists are shaped with that market predominantly in mind. Since the market has by and large agreed to ignore Clare it has been possible for publishers to do likewise. (Indeed they are likely to argue that they cannot afford not to do so.) And so a great poet has for long been more or less invisible.

There are of course other factors which have contributed towards this absurd state of affairs. For if when he was born mattered, where he was born mattered still more. A cottage in Helpston, Northamptonshire, simply wasn't the right kind of birthplace for a poet. Or rather, it was the right kind of place for a very particular kind of poet: "a peasant poet", with all that entails in terms of habits of condescension, of writing down and writing off. In 1820, literary London was easily able to make Clare into a fashion for a day. He was one more in a line that had begun with "Thresher" Duck, and the literary establishment knew how to recognize the line and what to take from it.

The following trifles are not the production of the poet who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegances and idiosyncrasies of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus and Virgil. ... Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for composing poetry by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic companions around him in his and their native language.

Thus Barnes, tongue-in-cheek, introduced himself in the famous 1786 "Kilmarnock" edition of his poems. He sold himself to a polite audience, and how was able to do it with the kind of insolent wit that brought him subscribers without spelling his poems.

In 1820, Clare's publisher, John Taylor, introduced the newest peasant poet with these words:

The following poems will probably attract some notice by their intrinsic merit; but they are also entitled to attention from the circumstances under which they were written. They are the genuine productions of a young peasant, a day-labourer in husbandry, who has had no advantages of education beyond those of his class.

"Genuine productions". You can tell how anxious Taylor is to reassure his audience that Clare is no Ertedok Shepherd, that he is the real thing. (Under Clare's name on the title-page the publisher put "A Northamptonshire Peasant", and added an opigraph: "The summer's flower is to the summer sweet / Though to itself it only live and die". Shakespeare's lines are meant to point towards Gray's comfortable celebration of flowers which are born to blush unseen.)

The audience believed. *Poems Descriptive* quickly went through four editions. Yet, as it happened, they weren't in fact reading Clare's "genuine productions". In the first place, one of Clare's self-appointed patrons, Lord Radstock, took exception to what he called the poet's "radicalism". Out therefore went ten original lines from "Helpstone". Radstock also

objected to the improprieties of some of the other poems. Out, in their entirety, went a number of ballads, including "Dolly's Mistake", and a marvellously funny parody of Cowper's "My Mary" ("Who save in Sunday's bib and tuck / Goes daily waddling like a duck / O'er head & ears in grease & muck / My Mary"). And out went much else besides. The bewdlenizing did not happen all at once. It was rather that each new edition meant, for Clare, more of his work gone at the request of the insistence of these who claimed to be acting in his interests. By the time the third edition appeared he was not surprisingly writing to Taylor's partner, James Hessey, "false delicacy Damn it I hate it beyond every thing".

Clare's outburst was not prompted merely by Radstock's acts of interference. There was also Taylor's "editing" to be reckoned with. For Taylor took it on himself to alter Clare's punctuation, remove certain dialect or "low" words (he urged more but Clare wouldn't budge); and he repeatedly recommended the poet to "elevate" his language. Clare's language bothered Taylor a good deal. In his introduction to the 1820 volume he lamented Clare's "inability to find those words which can fully declare his meaning. From the want of a due supply of these, and from his ignorance of grammar, he seems to labour under great disadvantages." There was also the problem of "provincial expressions". Given the terms of Taylor's introduction it seems reasonable to suppose that he behaved to Clare's manuscripts as Capel Loft behaved towards Bloomfield's: "making occasionally corrections with respect to orthography, and sometimes in the grammatical construction. The corrections, in point of grammar, reduce themselves almost wholly to a circumstance of provincial usage."

"Genuine productions"? Later volumes in the present edition will presumably determine the fine points of Taylor's editorial interference. But it is safe to say that Clare's first publisher denied the poet his subject-matter, his language, his voice. In the very process of being put into print he was, in a sense, being made invisible. "The peasant poet" was a literary concoction - and one, not surprisingly, that Clare nodded towards. No doubt he was tawling for an audience, no doubt he was uncertain about the nature or authenticity of his own genius, no doubt he did want to keep on the right side of Taylor. The result is that his first and least interesting volume includes a number of "literary" ballads, of an approved and utterly trivial kind, which Clare knew were expected of "peasant" poets. What it doesn't have, at least by the third edition, are those other very different kinds of ballad, of which "Dolly's Mistake" may stand as example. It belongs to a tradition of bawdy folk song quite unlike from the line routed through Bishop Percy and *Lyrical Ballads*. Clare absorbed this tradition at first hand, from his father, Parker Clare, and it clearly meant a great deal to him. Just how much we can now see, thanks to George Deacon's invaluable study *John Clare and the Folk Tradition*. What Deacon has done is to study Clare's own careful and wide-ranging collection of ballads - they are now in the Northampton Central Library and the Peterborough Museum - which makes plain how deeply Clare knew and understood the largely oral tradition of folk-tale and song that he so often drew on in his own poetry, how much he cared about preserving it (he wrote down variations of particular ballads, and he collected tunes, dance instructions and accounts of folk custom and lore that went with them); and Deacon also shows how it is sometimes quite difficult to decide whether one of Clare's "original" poems isn't merely a further variation on a ballad which he received from one or more singers. "Dolly's Mistake", for example, is close to "The Maid Got with Child at The Wako", which itself is remarkably similar to a song collected in Dorset, "Nelly the Milkmaid".

Deacon's book is exactly the kind of study we need. It is packed with information, all of it useful, and much of it crucially important in showing how deeply Clare's art is enmeshed in and derived from sources that orthodox knows very little about but which will have to be taken account of if Clare is to be fully understood. *John Clare and the Folk Tradition* has two other virtues. It is lucidly written and two other virtues. It is lucidly written and

Deacon handles a mass of disparate material with great assurance. Above all, however, its author does not condescend to Clare. On the contrary, he knows that he is dealing with a great poet.

Which is not what Clare's early editors thought nor is it how his literary advisers regarded him. When he came to plan *The Midsummer Cushion*, that volume from which he heped so much and which does indeed contain the greatest concentration of his genius, Clare included a number of wonderfully rumbustious ballad tales, among them "Helpstone Statute er the Recruiting Party", and "The Teper's Rant". No doubt both of them have sources in that tradition which Deacon has helped to open up for us, and indeed you can find ballads near to both in *Rhymes of Northern Bards*, which John Bell edited and published from Newcastle upon Tyne in 1812. But some twenty years later they proved too strong for literary London. Neither appeared in the published version of Clare's volume. Both seem to have been cut out at the insistence of another of his self-appointed patrons, Mrs Emerson. And she was certainly responsible for the title of the volume: *The Rural Muse*. Lavender-and-water "peasantry" replaces Clare's own lovely title.

So it has gone on. With the single, honourable exception of Edmund Blunden, Clare's twentieth-century editors have been content to draw on texts which were tampered with or "improved" by Taylor and others; and they have left out of account many of his greatest poems, simply because those poems, in whole or in part, were never allowed into print in his lifetime. Neither the Tibbles, in their Everyman edition, nor James Reeves, in the Poet's Bookshelf selection, nor Geoffrey Grigson, in his *Muse's Library* selection, have seen fit to reprint "The Flitting", which is surely one of the greatest poems of the nineteenth century, and which Mrs Emerson actually allowed through. Presumably she didn't realize how radical it was. But she must have sensed the

radicalism of "The Fallen Elm", for that marvellous poem did not survive into *The Rural Muse*. As far as I am aware it has been excluded from every subsequent selection of Clare's work.

But there is no point in naming individual poems. For we are not quarrelling about lapses of taste or judgment on the part of individual editors: the problem is more radical than that. What links most of Clare's editors with his biographers and the majority of his critics is their habit of condescension towards him. They invariably seem to feel that they are required to apelegizo for him, and they go out of their way to exonerate Taylor, Hessey and the rest of that sorry bunch from any suggestion of blame. Yet the truth is that from then until now those who claim to have been acting in Clare's interests are responsible for having pushed him to the margins.

Or until almost now, for at last matters are beginning to mend. In recent years there have been serious editions of *The Midsummer Cushion* and *The Rural Muse*, and Eric Robinson, the general editor of the new Oxford edition, has helped to produce a good edition of the *Shepherd's Calendar* (which fell into a pool of silence when it was first published in 1827), and a useful selection of Clare's poetry and prose (it even prints "Tic Flitting"). We are told that these two new Oxford volumes are "the first to appear of what will eventually be a collected edition of Clare's poetry". Considering the problems they must have faced, the editors have done an excellent job. For the problems were, and will continue to be, severe. These volumes print all the poetry that Clare is known to have written while in the private asylum at High Beech, Epping, where he stayed from 1837 until 1841, and in the Northampton Asylum, where he was from 1841 until his death. The editors point out that "many of the later poems survive only in the transcriptions made by W. F. Knight [The house-steward at Northampton] and other amanuenses [at the asylum], or in the versions published by

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visitors to High Beech or Northampton". Once we consider what Taylor thought himself entitled to do to Clare's manuscripts there is not much hope that what we have here is what Clare originally intended.

There are further problems. The punctuation of Knight and later amanuenses "is erratic, sometimes being heavy and obtrusive, sometimes non-existent, but it is impossible to go behind it with certainty". In addition, "poems printed in newspapers and journals were clearly liable to editorial emendations, about which Clare often forcefully complained, so that there is no guarantee of authenticity in the spelling, punctuation, grammar, or even vocabulary of the poems republished from such sources. We have no choice but to give them as they are."

This makes for glum reading. If the problems matter less than might at first be feared it is, I suppose, because on the whole these poems are not among Clare's greatest. I do not know why this should be, but it is possible to make some reasonable guesses. By the late 1830s he must have known that he had no audience and that he could no longer hope for one. In addition, not only was he shut into an asylum, but he was shut out of Helpston; and there was no going back. Even the famous, heart-wrenching "Journey From Essex" makes it clear that Clare had lost his way and his sense of self: "Returned home out of Essex & found no Mary - her & her family are as nothing to me now though she herself was once the dearest of all - & how can I forget." As the poems show, he couldn't. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of the later poems are written with her in mind even when she is not named; but many of them feel like routine exercises. They are increasingly desperate or despairing attempts to sustain a belief in the woman who was dead to him years before she in fact died. The representative tragedy they hint at is one that's most fully explored in *Great Expectations*. In Clare's own work it just occasionally produces a great poem, the poem beginning "I have a love when young" (for example). The editors say that its title is "Song", which means that there is no authority for previous editors calling it "Secret Love". On the other hand Robinson and Powell cannot be correct in wanting to read the first line as "I hid my love when young while I . . ." for the meaning has to be "I hid not while". The syntactic structure is repeated in lines 3 and 4: "I hid my love to my despair / Till I could not bear to look at light". I accept that Knight wrote down "while" but, as Grigson recognized, "till" is the right word. For among other things the poem is about the terrible confusion of feelings that love (for Mary) has brought him: exultance, guilt, joy, terror. He hid his love till it brought him to a kind of madness.

Nor do I see any point in keeping to Knight's heavy punctuation of "A Vision". I lost the love, of heaven above; I spurn'd the lust, of earth below; I felt the sweets of fancied love, And hell itself my only foe.

No, Clare couldn't have so written or dictated those lines. This is an instance where the editors might well have permitted themselves some emendation, particularly in view of Barbara Strang's splendid essay (appended to the Midway/Carcaret edition of *The Rural Muse*) in which she points out that "doing without punctuation [as lawyers know] imposes a discipline on both writer and reader, though rhythmical and metrical structure eases the task. It is not, as early editors thought, that Clare leaves out something we can put in for him because we have received a conventional education; rather, he writes in such a way that this troublesome device can be dispensed with." Her remarks should have made it possible for the editors of these volumes to ignore some of Knight's insistent punctuation.



But these are mere quibbles, and are offset by the satisfaction of discovering that, as I had always believed, the last line of "The Peasant Poet", is "The poet in his joy", and not, as Grigson printed, "A poet . . .". Clare's use of the definite article makes emphatic his determination not to be taken as a special case, and it also enforces his avowal of poetic identity through joy.

It was an identity that became increasingly difficult to hold by. Robinson and Powell print a fragment which I do not remember to have seen before. In which Clara, writing in 1845, speaks of poets as those "That leave no writing they would wish to blot / Time mottled in centuries finds them unforget". I cannot believe he would have left unblotted all the lines that the editors have so diligently made available to us; but I am glad that their enterprise will from now on make it impossible to forget him.

Or will it? For I have one major complaint. The editors say that they feel Clare "is above all a poet to be appreciated and loved by the common reader before the professor and literary critic". I leave aside the possibility that some critics are common readers and that even professors might like to be; and I will not pursue the hint of anxious condescension that their words imply. But how in God's name will any reader, common or otherwise, be able to appreciate Clare when they are asked to pay £85 for these two volumes? I can only hope that Messrs Robinson and Powell are planning cheap paperback versions of their edition. I also hope that such versions will soon be in the bookshops. For that is what we need if Clare is to take his rightful place as one of our great poets.

Volume II of *The Browning Institute Studies: An annual of Victorian literary and cultural history*, guest-edited by Wendell Stacy Johnson with the assistance of William S. Peterson (221pp. The Browning Institute and the Graduate School and University Center, City University, New York, 0 930252 16 0) contains essays by William E. Buckley, Cory Beman Davies, Susan Blalock, Richard Dellamora, and C. Stephen Finley. Michael Levenson writes on "The Modernist Narrator on the Victorian Sailing Ship", Walter Kendrick on "The Inn Album" and Eve Nelson Shapiro and William S. Peterson provide a cumulative index for *Browning Institute Studies* (1973-82).

Admired admonisher

Rosemary Ashton

G. B. TENNYSON (Editor)
A Carlyle Reader: Selections from the writings of Thomas Carlyle
497pp. Cambridge University Press. £25 (paperback, £5.95).
0 521 26238 0

G. B. Tennyson has succeeded well in his unenviable task of anthologizing Carlyle's writings in one volume. Faced with the thirty volumes of the complete works of a writer known variously as an essayist, translator, historian, "novelist" (though *Sartor Resartus* cannot strictly be called a novel) and philosopher - in short, the first and most prolific of the Victorian sages - Tennyson has rightly chosen to emphasize the earlier work. For Carlyle's enormous influence on his age began with his *Edinburgh Review* essays of the late 1820s on the condition of England question, lasted till the mid-1840s with the publication of *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) and *Past and Present* (1843) and rapidly waned after *Later-Day Parnassus* (1850).

In this collection Tennyson duly reprints a selection of Carlyle's early essays and the whole of *Sartor*, adding necessarily very brief extracts from *The French Revolution*, *On Heroes*, *Past and Present* and later works, as well as a few letters and notebook entries which throw light on the works reproduced here. On the whole, the works are allowed to speak for themselves, being prefaced by the most brief and general of editorial introductions. While I sympathize with this, I wonder whether a reader new to Carlyle will close this book with a clear idea about why Carlyle had such an influence in his time. Though Tennyson analyses Carlyle's fondness for paradox and draws attention to his amazing fertility in

spawning compound words and abstract nouns (on the German model) he writes rather too generally about the philosophical, religious, political and social issues which Carlyle confronted.

What this selection does is allow the reader to be struck throughout by the extraordinary way in which Carlyle's associative imagination worked. He saw everything in terms of some thing else which might appear to be only loosely connected with it until Carlyle had forged, indeed forced, it into the unity of metaphor. In this way, old metaphors like that of the body politic or the ship of state are strikingly revitalized. So, in the first of the *Later-Day Parnassus* Carlyle takes on the (abhorrent) idea of universal suffrage and democracy:

Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by the exact plans of vinting. The ship may vote this and the other decks and below, in the most harmonious, exquisitely constitutional manner; the ship, to go round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with adamant lines by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote. If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get round the Cape; if you cannot, - the ruffian Winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable icebergs, dumb privy-counsellors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic admonitions; you will be flung half-frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by icebergs councilors, and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get round Cape Horn at all.

The language is vital and witty, but - and surely here lies the reason why Carlyle was consciously banished as an influence by so many admiring Victorians - remains rhetorical and unfocused. It says nothing intellectually respectable about democracy or universal suffrage.

Students of the nineteenth century cannot afford to ignore Carlyle; in the main, they have not the leisure to read him whole. An anthology such as this offers an acceptable middle way.

Ambush at Dry Guleh

Terence Hawkes

KENNETH FRIEDENREICH (Editor)
Accompanying the Players: Essays celebrating Thomas Middleton, 1580-1980
248pp. New York: AMS Press. \$34.50.
0 904 62278 X

T.S. Eliot was never more American than in his peculiar assessment of the Englishman Thomas Middleton. Writing in 1927, he virtually turns him into the hero of a Hollywood Western: "He has no point of view . . . he has no message . . . a great overflow of human nature, without fear, without sentiment, without prejudice . . . inscrutable, solitary, unadmired . . . dying no one knows when and no one knows how."

Yup, but . . . It was time for a change, perhaps, and the 400th anniversary of Middleton's birth in 1980 offered an evident opportunity for reevaluation. But, as Kenneth Friedenreich notes, publication delays bushwhacked the present celebratory collection, delaying it for nearly three years, by which time the festival wagon had rolled on. As an attempt to head it off at the pass, the volume shows as much spirit and commitment as circumstances permit.

There have of course been plenty of advances on Eliot. Friedenreich's introduction stresses the animating function of London life in Middleton's work, but it also draws attention to the disconcerting "moral field" deployed in the neglected play *The Widow*. Joseph Messina's careful account of the "moral design" of *A Trick To Catch the Old One*, David Bergstrom's painstaking tour of the "moral landscape" of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, together with the civilly pragmatic *Triumph of Truth*, and Michael McCann's vigorous probing of the "moral dialectic" of *Women Beware Women* all show a readiness to perceive a decipherable "message" in Middleton's response to the complexity of contemporary ethical issues. Roma Gill's incisive survey of the playwright's "world" presents a detailed panorama of the social and economic forces, in respect of which his plays certainly offer a

"point of view", and Kenneth Muir makes cogent case for the reconsideration of too hitherto undervalued but masterly pieces. *More Dissemblers Besides Women* and *No No, No Help Like a Woman's*.

Much more historical detail has become available. In an elegant and provocative argument, Anne Lancashire puts the case that *The Witch* mirrors the love triangle which developed in 1610-13, involving Francis Howard, Robert Carr and Robert, Earl of Essex, and she suggests that the so-called failure of the play might in fact prove an instance of deliberate suppression. Thoughtful essays by Stephen Wignor on the patterns of love and sexual relations in *Women Beware Women* and by Peter F. Morrison on the challenging nature of *The Changeling* help to extend the potential social and political impact of both plays.

Gaps remain. The question of the role played by women in society, crucial to the plays and touched on in a number of these essays, goes nevertheless in vain for a protracted treatment. Eliot's inborn generalizations, "Blanche remains, like Beatrice in *The Changeling*, a real woman", with their shoddy resort to the notion of perpetual, unchanging female "types", demand a latter-day shoot-out for it. Instead, more have been an apt occasion for it. Instead, more mundane considerations prevail. David Richardson's account of what seems to have been a singularly unappetizing production of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and W. Nicholas Knight's rather leaden exposition of sexual innuendo in the "law language" of *Michaelmas Term* respectively, whilst G.B. Shand investigates the political dimensions of *The Widow of Solomon Paraphrased* with the resignation of one whose initial concession ranks the work as "a stupefying read". Finally, Norman A. Bly's computation of Middleton's adjusted and thusinautistically addresses itself to fundamental questions of style, such as "Ate a writer's inventions merely spotlights of airy foam on the surface of the great river of literary convention?" Eliot's Middleton rides briefly again in the reflection that his plays at least require us to smile when you say that.

Looking in both directions

Thomas Sutcliffe

ROYA K. HEATH
Orellia
255pp. Allison and Busby. £8.95.
0 85031 528 X

Recent boundary changes on the literary map make Guyana an interesting and difficult constituency for a writer. It lies roughly at the end of the Caribbean archipelago, but is firmly locked into the land mass of Latin America - insulated by its language but undeniably under the influence of the continental interior. Roy A. K. Heath has represented it faithfully for many years now, and his writing honours the desire to look in both directions. His novels mediate, without compromising their own principles, between a phlegmatic realism which owes its loyalties to an English tradition, and the florid, often over-exaggerated romanticism of many Latin American writers. *Orellia* reconciles these antagonistic factions not in the friendship between Ben, a groom who has educated himself beyond his circumstances, and Carl, a taciturn Indian from the Guyanese bush, but also in Heath's unique blend of exuberant prose and unsentimental clarity about mental states.

It is a form of magical realism, Latin America's biggest artistic cash crop, but the magic resides in the accumulation of ordinary details rather than in the construction of a con-

spicuously unlikely reality. Indeed one of the merits of Heath's writing is his measured indifference to what is exotic about the settings for his novels. He never makes the mistake of confusing what is incidental with what is central. This doesn't mean that the novels are vague or unspecific; the clutter of daily life in Guyana, the weather and the local speech, a collision between coarse and delicate vocabularies - all these are described marvellously. But none of it is laid down with the tourist's exuberant self-congratulation which marmalade travel writing and the work of many novelist-colonizers. Heath's sense of proportion in description also enables him to deal with mental intoxication without losing his own sobriety; his style quietly asserts that the material of the novel is ordinary and that much of its fascination resides in how ordinary it is.

His central character is a rum-shop philosopher who locks himself into damaging and hopeless relationships with his wife, his mistress and his master, by following his impulses. Suffering the consequences he appears to himself as "a man of apocalyptic insight, able to stand aside and regard, without grief or pity, things that were and were going to be". These are not entirely delusions of grandeur, and Heath is generous enough to his own creation to credit Ben with some of the most startling insights in the novel. Later he fears that "his sanity would vanish in a croaking of malignant explosions". But though he does mad things

and ends by killing the man to whom he believes himself inextricably bound, it is hard to dismiss him as simply insane. The real achievement of the book is to present his mental life without succumbing to fraudulent special effects.

Heath composes Ben's disorder out of familiar oddities because he knows very well that all sane people hear voices too. The best passages in the book are attempts to capture the routine vagaries of thinking: the alarming violence and impetus of imagined arguments, the embarrassing inability to recall first impressions in the light of later judgments, the way in which thoughts can always get past the guards without being properly challenged. In fact the novel shows what happens when the lack of co-ordination between intuition and analysis becomes too great. The most concrete image of that gap is the strange friendship, very close to love, between Ben, who interrogates himself relentlessly, and Carl, whose decisions about women, for example, or about where to live, are made with an arbitrary suddenness which seems to preclude inner debate. I can't think of any novel which describes so well the incorrigible belatedness of judgment. *Orellia* is a more sombre book than many of Heath's earlier novels, but there is a sort of black humour in the depiction of Ben's consciousness, which like an incompetent policeman constantly battles to catch up with events, arriving on the scene too late and starting flustered inquiries into cause and effect.

Something simple, something short

D. J. Enright

R. C. HUTCHINSON
The Quinlan
Edited by Robert Green
237pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £8.95.
0 85635 515 1

One's first impression of these twenty-six stories is that they could serve as models in "How to Write" correspondence course. Short enough (most of them) for newspaper usage and demanding enough, the scene set briskly, no nonsense about depth psychology, the situation neatly created, a surprise ending. And part of the lesson might be that ghost stories are more than averagely saleable, especially when set on the Underground or in a railway train speeding towards a level crossing - and that, moreover, you can appease the sceptics by revealing in the final sentence that the supernatural happenings took place in a dream.

The author himself might seem somewhat simple-minded: one character just cannot believe that his good new pipe with good fresh tobacco in it could go out even once between Tottenham Court Road and Camden Town stations: "It had never occurred before". Ah, but it's a sign - the next stop ("All change here") is hell. Admittedly this is the earliest of the stories, written when R. C. Hutchinson was an undergraduate at Oxford; it was reprinted in *Cape's The Best Short Stories of 1928*.

The stories strike one as remoter in origin than they are, some of them written, one would say, by someone with Blunden's or Sassoon's war experience. Yet Hutchinson was born as late as 1907. Elsewhere "old-fashioned" is the word that springs to mind. "His thoughts would fly to her every time he heard one of the sugary dance-tunes which the perverse Americans had so remorselessly spread over every quarter of the earth." In "Slaves of Woman" we hear of a road "gloriously smooth, straight as the back of a colonel", and the characters drop with casual ease sub grand names as Bacon, Horace Walpole, Shakespeare ("an allegorical blighter. He had a habit of pulling one's leg") and *Mater Nivaria*. His gimpeck is less grand: sophisticated titled bachelor lectures Wobegone rejected sutor on the "old trap" of marriage and persuades him to go to Africa and do something useful instead; sutor receives repentant call from loved one and rushes back to her; bachelor turns out to have a wife and child currently away in London. More interesting is "The Wall not Made with Hands", an allegory of the kind called "Kafkaesque", about a husband and wife who live on separate sides of a glass wall; in confidence each tells a visitor that of course the wall doesn't really exist but the other imagines it does.

The tale of two white men who run down an African in their car and pay over all they have to the dead man's inheritance.

Discovering that the victim has long been making quite a good living out of being killed, is only good for a grunt of amusement. If that. But Hutchinson later shows himself less simple. An item begins: "In a day when all men are interested in a thing called 'psychology' - a bastard science, derived from an advanced physiology and an imperfect understanding of elementary metaphysics . . ." Hum, not so silly after all! The speaker, attending a conference in France, is offered a "little treat" and fears he is to be taken to see "some deplorable company giving a performance of Racine, hideously cul".

Hutchinson drew a firm, rather too hard and fast, distinction between the genres of novel and short story. Even the longer stories are pretty short. Among them, in "Exhibit A", published in 1974, the author's experience in the Middle East during the Second World War may have provided the authoritative technical detail which goes some way to offsetting the facetiousness of this Persian yarn. And "Crossroads", an uncharacteristically bitter story of

betrayal set in Czechoslovakia (a famous actress cheats a political refugee out of his seat on a plane headed for Zurich) perhaps bears out Hutchinson's opinion that he was more at ease with foreign parts and persons. Far and away the most telling pieces are in size the slightest of all, two sad spare sketches of unemployment

his closest friend because "when you're unemployed you can't give a fellow a drink for the one he gives you"; in the other a former carpenter doesn't even try for an opening, he is despondently sure his once neat pair of hands has forgotten the feel of the work. His wife thinks he's gone lazy, but "what was the use of going after a job when you knew you weren't any ruddy good?"

Robert Green quotes Hutchinson as saying, "Stowness (theedium of which ought to be cunningly alleviated) is an element essential to the novelistic form - as opposed to the dramatic or short-story form." While the brevity of his stories neither encourages wit nor accommodates much in the way of soul, the tediousness of Hutchinson's novels isn't always sufficiently alleviated by cunning of whatever species. Yet I wouldn't feel inclined to sneer at *Testament*, with its 730 pages in the King Penguin edition. Authentic in fact though overwrought in feeling, it is the nearest that British writers have come to *War and Peace* - and it embraces Revolution as well.

Background material

Toby Flitton

FRANK VICTOR DAWES
Inheritance
291pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.
0 09 15553 0 2

Inheritance, intended perhaps as a study in bastardy, is a stolid documentary narrative of a single career. Frank Cole, its hero, is indeed illegitimate, but his parentage is mainly an excuse for intruding additional strands of background colour into an already overcrowded canvas of London life in the 1930s and '40s. His father, a rotter and a botter, dies deservedly of drink; his mother, disowned for her mishap by her upper-middle-class family, becomes a midwife, a feminist and a Peace Pledge activist - all a far cry from the marquess with whom she had another First World War flirtation.

The offspring of a casual liaison, Cole eventually becomes a journalist, a calling which allows further evidential developments in this

fictional romp through social history: black-shirt rallies, the Jarrow march, Mrs Simpson at Fellsstowe, the abdication, the Spanish Civil War, and a great deal else. Journalism is followed by politics, marriage to a slightly county girl met in the TB sanatorium (medical background here to the fore) giving way to an affair with a secretary. Russian photographers, some blackmail for mere adultery, a bogus Mediterranean drowning and a defection scandal ensue: a rich harvest of documentation, on which character barely impinges.

The narrator (the hero's daughter) pops up from time to time and is revealed at the end as closer to her blunt-spoken, left-wing grandmother who attempted to fulfil herself in a brief and disastrous affair so long before. For the sake of continuity, or inheritance, the granddaughter is shown in the last few pages belonging to the most up-to-date elite: a woman television director with a baby by her black lover, she completes the series of over-packed progressive scenarios that fail throughout to carry any conviction.

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Published October 1983

For the fallen

Paul Keegan

JAMES DUCHAN
A Parish of Rich Women
 185pp. Homish Hamilton. £8.95.
 0241 113105

SEBASTIAN FAULK
A Trick of the Light
 204pp. Bodley Head. £7.95.
 0370 305892

In *A Parish of Rich Women* the members of the cast are named so often that they become memorable. We are never introduced, and they may pass us by, but they do so over and over again; the pages bristle with the names of those named.

David proposed to Mary that they go to Harry's night club and Adam was obliged to follow to keep an eye on them; even Toby, who was not popular with Harry's proprietor, risked an insolent entry with Laura under David's protection.

Adam intrigued against Oliver. Mary took no notice. Poppy was a better bet, for Mary thought her a mere screw-lart and possibly half-witted and even Laura could not fail to notice her turning her pretty Chinese eyes on Toby.

Their knowing each other so well is unlucky for us, because they hardly need to communicate among themselves, with the result that we learn remarkably little beyond the fact that Adam does not care for David, who dislikes Toby but admires Johnny (as does Adam); that Toby is dependent on Mary (Adam's "tart") and devoted to Laura; and that Laura loathes Oliver but relies on him for heroin, mandrax and amyl nitrate, as does everybody. Except Adam, who has just returned from "covering the conflict" in the Lebanon to write a book, but is temporarily distracted by the movable feast, allowing himself to be "transported through the scorched countryside to large houses" in the Cotswolds, Shropshire, Scotland, Surrey and Kent.

Part of our interest in these displacements must be with the narrator's command of a complex, almost baroque, English style.

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Capital of crazies

Mary Kathleen Benet

ROBERT PLUNKET
My Search for Warren Harding
 247pp. Bantam. £8.95.
 0860720713

ANN NIETZKE
Windowlight
 191pp. Picador. £7.50 (paperback, £2.50).
 0330 283359

VALERIE MINER
Winter's Edge
 184pp. Methuen. £8.50 (paperback, £2.95).
 413 539202

California's literary role as world capital of craziness is now well established; writers are beginning to play with the tradition and, more interestingly, to deepen it. Robert Plunket's first novel takes a New York narrator, that traditionally disdainful observer of West Coast manners, and flings him into the plot of *The Aspern Papers*, transposed to a crumbling Hollywood Spanish mansion inhabited by the senile ex-mistress of Warren G. Harding. Our hero Elliot has a foundation grant and an exclusive piece of information: he alone knows that this old lady is the mother of a Presidential bastard and the author of a hot-stuff memoir. When he meets her fat grand-daughter Jonica and great-grandson baby Warren, he is on the track of an academic scoop. He rents the pool house on the estate and begins a fevered journey through a Los Angeles of subversive Mexicans, brutal cops, gaudy money, and total losers. "That was the trouble with these people - they were raised so poorly. I don't even think they were raised; they were just allowed to grow up." He stays in houses where "Bert and LaBelle Lane could have moved in with just their toothbrushes", befriends Jonica's Elvis-like husband, and flees to a down-market Palm Springs health farm. The momentum never flags.

His biggest problem, though, is fat Jonica's need for love. Elliot convinces her that he loves her for her dimpled (all over) self and not for her grandmother's trunkful of letters, but she still doesn't get the point: if she is to be famous like Julie Nixon, surely people will believe who she is even without the letters? The final joke is that Elliot's quest comes to seem as futile as the activities of Jonica and her friends. In a world where real fame is a voice-over on a jeans commercial. He, with his background in zoo directing and Morris dancing, is as bizarre as they, and as for the corrupt, inept Harding administration and the pillandering of its handsome figurehead - the past ceases to exist not just because nobody values it, but because it has no value.

For Ann Nietzke, on the contrary, everything has value: she lovingly salvages the details of wrecked lives and builds them into a

careful portrait of a wholly different California. *Windowlight* shows the ravaged beach town of Venice as a refuge, the place she has chosen in which to recuperate from a failed marriage and to contemplate from her apartment window the comings and goings of the fellow refugees. Self-consciously revealing about her own attempts at writing, *Windowlight* nevertheless feels her way into something that is no longer seemed possible: treating these over-exploited characters without exaggeration and restoring their reality.

Nietzke keeps her distance, but not always: sometimes she is down there in the street, picking up a lover, hugging herself a drink, getting to know the muralists and transsexuals, reading the mail to her geriatric neighbors. Her heroines are waitresses, bandaging wounded lives with their memory for special orders and favourite jams. Her villains are the tourists who halt the unfortunate, and the social scientists to whom they are fodder. On trip back to Tennessee to visit her redneck family, and in reminiscences of her childhood, she subtly and calmly draws us into her own feeling about the crazies of California: it is a beseeching place because only other sufferers know about compassion.

Valerie Miner likes waitresses, too, and street people and old folks clinging together against the property developers. Set in downtown San Francisco, *Winter's Edge* also deals with a collection of urban flotsam. But Miner says in her preface that she believes writing to be a collective act, and instead of Nietzke's painfully individual observation we have something that reads as if the collective had voted what to put in it. It would be a good thing to have more fiction about older women, so let's make our heroines about seventy. And let's show them with their sexuality, too: it's age to do otherwise. We'll have a black woman who is running against a flimsy developer for the Board of Supervisors. And then what?

Long before John F. Kennedy used a comparable technique, Franklin D. Roosevelt brought battalions of intellectuals to Washington to serve as his "brain trust"; the latter, combined with the times, proved irresistible. Before long the entire intellectual class had swung heavily to the left, until the moment came when Lionel Trilling could say with reasonable accuracy that there was "no intellectual right" in America.

Whereupon, in the 1950s, there emerged out of Yale a bright young man named William F. Buckley Jr. Cultivated, wealthy, good-looking, charming, a true-blue conservative, equipped with what has been called the "fastest mind in the West", Buckley established himself rapidly. He had found Yale rotten through with all the left-liberal pieties and so set down and wrote a book hailing his *alma mater* over the coals - a thing a Yale man doesn't often do. It was his spectacular *God and Man at Yale*.

The conservative intellectual being an almost extinct species in America at the time, a

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With a bug and a whisper

J. K. L. Walker

RICHARD H. FRANCIS
The Whispering Gallery
 251pp. Aodré Deutsch. £8.95.
 0233 976469

The murder of a chemical company executive in a Manchester restaurant provides the focus for the apparently unconnected sequence of bizarre events brought to light in Richard H. Francis's new novel, *The Whispering Gallery*. Part thriller, part strip cartoon, part black pantomime, the novel leaves an agreeably bitter taste in the mouth, of human greed and folly conjoined at the end to produce the big but, in this instance, allent bang.

Deep-frozen Antarctic bugs mixed with water prove an acceptable substitute for petrol, but have unhappy side effects akin to Legionnaire's disease when spilt from a tanker. Inspector Chapman, whose fifty-year-old wife plays with bricks and trains as she slips further into senile dementia, and Superintendent Rostri, tormented by flatulence, doggedly investigate murder and spillage, inching closer to the Hautbois Company's secret operations in their

Salford research laboratory. Vital witnesses and confessions are respectfully ignored: the Fat Man observed by the solicitor Anthony Manley firing through the restaurant window is dismissed as a projection of Manley's unwholesome sex-life; the aggressive innkeeper of Green Principle as too plainly launched from the wilder shores of ecology. Meanwhile, remote from these earthly affairs, the abandoned astronaut Finn Malko moves deeper into outer space, victim of an earlier Hubble's experiment.

The Whispering Gallery invites a reading as sardonic parable on late capitalist society. A conversation between the former SAS officer, Gordon Frohisher, now turned crusader, and an accomplice is set in a derelict Victorian railway station whose acoustic properties enable the watching Rostri and Chapman to pick up a few fragments of the dialogue. There may, too, be more to Rostri's flatulence. More specifically, the garbled sounds emerging from Finn Malko's radio, so unlike the rich tones of Patricia Hughes heard earlier, tell him that home has nothing left to say to him. This is a bleak conclusion but Richard Francis arrives at it entertainingly enough, directing his mad and grotesques skilfully in their dance.

No place for non-smokers

Joanna Motion

INDIRA MAHINDRA
The Club
 160pp. Bodley Head. £7.95.
 0370 305965

When the tinned kippers come with hot pork and the prawn curry shares a tablecloth with Kraft cheese, East is meeting West. This particular spread constitutes breakfast after an early morning elephant ride in South India in Indira Mahindra's first novel, *The Club*. The time is the 1950s, the muddled, uneasy decade following Independence and Partition. The participants are a mixed lot, trying, a bit halfheartedly, to shake down to form the new India: dispossessed princely rulers; stayers on; Indian coffee planters with names like Sandy and Pony; a Muslim major in the Indian army; disgruntled sons and bored women.

The British are a minority in this gathering but their customs and manners, exported a little self-consciously across the time-lag from "home", still predominate. At the Christmas Eve dance at the Club, black tie remains *de rigueur*. The language round the breakfast-table full of the good shows, capital ideas and hearty chaps of an artificially preserved military idiom. And if the general complaint is that everything is worse than it was, it is the Indians

who complain the loudest.

The Club explores the intense burst of curiosity about each other felt by the Indians and the British immediately after Independence - particularly social and sexual curiosity. In the circles which Indira Mahindra describes, the obvious ground for this exploration is the Club itself, whose billiard table, dance floor and bridge games, though increasingly neglected, still provide a meeting place for both sides - up to a point, at least. Here, individuals may find they share common preoccupations: outsiders briefly acknowledge their foreignness; members make advances to each other, welcome or otherwise; aimless women of either race, with thirty years to wait before the present-day distraction of the video, find momentary stimulus in flirtation and gambling. But the Club - n/ the Clubs, where the baize is yellowing and the wicker unravelling throughout India - imposes barriers almost as soon as it opens doors.

Indira Mahindra is a fine observer of the period detail: the copper-covered peg tables with call bells, the comic golfing prints and the planters' bungalows like "the English country house on a Makintosh coffee tin". Is it true to the period, too, that an almost *Young Visitors* tone should keep sliding on to the page? - "after last-minute pleasanties, they left"; "the dressing table looked festive with Lucy's toiletry". There is a sort of innocence about a society

whose idea of a good joke is a Havana cigar in the mouth of a stuffed bison's head; yet that humour consorts with some pretty self-damning sexual behaviour. It is hard not to conclude that these people are less innocent than empty-headed and under-employed.

Indeed, the author is almost too assured in conveying the deathly skimpiness of the exchanges of the Club world. At times the sense of vivid human beings leading inconsequential lives to a pulse beat of whisky and cigarettes is enough to leave the book beached.

Lucy stretched out on the Regency sofa. Rance curled up in her lap. Mabel lit another cigarette, blew out the flame and threw the matchstick into the fireplace. Peter handed her a drink from a silver salver. She took a long sip, inhaled deeply, and as the smoke poured out said, "I'm sorry if I upset you."

The Belpur Club is no place for non-smokers. It is not that the novel is short of incident - an evocatively described jungle expedition, a car crash, rape - but the characters are worryingly unshaped by their experiences. When at the end of the novel we get a murky explanation of the personal inadequacies of the stayers on, Mabel and Lucy seem too flimsy to absorb the extra weight imposed on them. The place and period of *The Club* draw upon a sliver of history which has a distinctive fascination - and exasperation. It would lend itself to a novel which has the surface sheen of this one, but gutsier and more inventive depths.

Where the action is

Richard Grenier

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY
The Story of Henri Tod
 254pp. Allen Lane. £8.95.
 01739 13614

Long before John F. Kennedy used a comparable technique, Franklin D. Roosevelt brought battalions of intellectuals to Washington to serve as his "brain trust"; the latter, combined with the times, proved irresistible. Before long the entire intellectual class had swung heavily to the left, until the moment came when Lionel Trilling could say with reasonable accuracy that there was "no intellectual right" in America.

Whereupon, in the 1950s, there emerged out of Yale a bright young man named William F. Buckley Jr. Cultivated, wealthy, good-looking, charming, a true-blue conservative, equipped with what has been called the "fastest mind in the West", Buckley established himself rapidly. He had found Yale rotten through with all the left-liberal pieties and so set down and wrote a book hailing his *alma mater* over the coals - a thing a Yale man doesn't often do. It was his spectacular *God and Man at Yale*.

The conservative intellectual being an almost extinct species in America at the time, a

lot of people simply didn't know what to make of Buckley. Still, he found a ready audience with his witty syndicated column, and amid all the left-wing journals of opinion there soon appeared his highly successful conservative *National Review*. In time he became the host of America's most educated television talk show, *Firing Line*. Irving Kristol has described neo-conservatives as "liberals who have been mugged by reality".

There were so many people being mugged by reality that they started coming over in droves in what has been called America's "conservative revolution". People who a decade or two before thought he was a fascist were delighted to shake Buckley's hand, for he had become a national institution, and, it goes without saying, Ronald Reagan's favourite intellectual.

Another service Buckley has performed for American conservatives has been to alter somewhat their Herbert Hoover image. In America, it was thought, liberals were smarter, they had more fun, they had prettier women. Buckley has so much fun that amid his countless other activities (see his recent autobiographical *Overdrive*), he began in 1976 to write a series of thrillers about the adventures of a CIA operative named Blackford Oates, in the first of which, *Saving the Queen*, Oates is compelled for reasons of plot to seduce the Queen of England (you remember Queen Charlotte).

Wittily and gracefully written, as always with Buckley, it was set back in the staid 1950s, when there were not many ambiguities in the American heart regarding foreign affairs, and when "politics stopped at the water's edge". It was widely regarded as an enjoyable and skilful escapist entertainment.

But in the latest of the series, *The Story of Henri Tod*, Buckley is edging his ways slowly into

American intelligence services learn that Ulbricht is about to construct the Berlin Wall, the book takes us through all the shadowy, threatening corridors of intelligence work (Buckley having put some time in with the CIA himself). Without losing any of its author's usual thrust and parry, it also explores deeply and realistically the characters at the centre of the action, both real and fictional. We spend some time in the minds of John F. Kennedy, Ulbricht and Khrushchev himself (drawn from *Khrushchev Remembers*), and meet some fascinating anti-Communist intelligence "assets" in East Berlin.

Plot and counter-plot, sex and sudden death, *Henri Tod* is a great success. But Buckley's skills are so formidable, I want him to leave the simple if sometimes tense days of pre-Vietnam America for our own day, with the American political élites split on both foreign policy and the CIA, and dark struggles within the CIA itself.

The newer nastiness

John Melmoth

JONATHAN MEADES
Filthy English
 160pp. Cape. £7.95.
 0224 021451

The stories in *Filthy English* (some of which merit description as novellas) simultaneously register Jonathan Meades's arrival as a writer of fiction and establish his manner and range of preoccupations. Meades's world is squalid, bleak and cheerless, his characters are veridically "over-fucked and under-douched", joyless, provincial, lumpy, criminally arrogant, incoherent and violent. But the elegance and virtuosity of the prose sustain a macabre moral neutrality, a breezy callousness, an amusement at and detachment from the depths to which people will stoop. The technique preaches empathy and invites wryness.

The title story begins with gentle mockery of blooded bookwormism but ends with a gothic eruption of fascism, insanity, murder and the

anal rope of a child. "Spring and Fall" recreates a provincial, lower-middle-class childhood in the years after the war. The beloved only son is fixed by his parents' sentimentality: "He lived in a garden with green hedges fat as clouds, he climbed hills and walked on stilts and vaulted over walls", and pampered by childless neighbours. He resorts to suicide as a means of punishing his folks and eluding their claims; his mother is left to mourn "the being bloomed from the seed I was lost to". "Oh So Bent" stages a homosexual manslaughter ("You're so respectably bent. You're a net curtain and a Agadir only to provide the culprit queer") in a garden with green hedges fat as clouds, he climbed hills and walked on stilts and vaulted over walls", and pampered by childless neighbours. He resorts to suicide as a means of punishing his folks and eluding their claims; his mother is left to mourn "the being bloomed from the seed I was lost to". 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Rallying round Henry

J. A. Turner

DAPHNE BENNETT
Margot: A life of the Countess of Oxford and Asquith
442pp. Gollancz. £12.95.
0375 032790
JANE ABDOY and CHARLOTTE GERE
The Souls
192pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £12.95.
0283 989203

Both these books are written by and for people who believe that Margot Asquith and her friends and relations are to be taken very seriously indeed. Those who cannot manage this act of faith will find the going rough. For a group of people whose principal claim to notoriety is that they were very rich and fairly silly, the "Souls" have given their Boswells remarkably little fun.

This need not have been so. After all, the story-line for Daphne Bennett's biography of Margot is extremely promising. The daughter of an absurdly successful Victorian speculator is introduced to society through her father's political connections. Ten attention-grabbing years, flirting with half the leading figures in national politics, culminate in marriage to the Home Secretary. Fourteen years later the Home Secretary has become the Liberal Prime Minister and the heroine is *ex officio* a leading political hostess. Then tragedy. Driven to other women and the bottle by the trials of

office and marriage to the heroine, the Prime Minister gives up in a moment of exasperation after two years of a European war and flounces off the political stage to re-emerge a few months later as the last of the Romans. Unfortunately he has no pension. The heroine gallantly turns to her writing-desk and earns large sums, despite her literary deficiencies, in recounting a version of recent political events which destroys much of what remains of her husband's reputation. Meanwhile the Liberal Party crumbles, to general incomprehension. Her husband dead, the heroine lives on into a gallant widowhood, "rude, dictatorial and magnificent". Born under Victoria, she dies in the first month of the Atlee government, depressed and bewildered by the horrors of the modern age.

It is, admittedly, all a little far-fetched. If Margot Asquith had not existed, no novelist would have dared to invent her. E. F. Benson merely copied her in youth for *Dodo*, "a pre-tenacious donkey with the heart and brains of a linner". Mrs Bennett, who clearly likes her subject, is at pains to exonerate her from charges of this sort by letting the reader understand how it felt to be Margot. Unluckily she falls feet first into the trap of taking Margot at her own valuation and that of her friends. Her enemies' view, which on the whole has been more fashionable, is certainly harsher but it may not therefore be entirely wrong. The biography follows Margot's autobiography rather closely, and relies on it for most of the detail and all of the structure of her early life. A

few personal relationships, such as those with Alfred Milner and Peter Flower, are illuminated from unpublished manuscript collections. This is done well enough. It is interesting that young Miss Tennant should have been acquainted with great men such as Jowett and Gladstone, but not entirely surprising since she was pretty, very rich, and possessed of Liberal connections. Women like that were in short supply. Margot was therefore able to prolong her adolescence until the age of thirty, with no serious challenge to her self-esteem.

When she became Mrs Asquith, in 1894, it was soon clear that she was out of her depth. There is no sign that she, or later her biographer, grasped the predicament of Liberalism at the turn of the century or during the First World War. Although that part of the book dealing with the period of her marriage is very largely about Asquith, directly or indirectly, the only thing it explains is why he turned to other women. Margot's loyalty was tenacious, uncomprehending and ultimately suffocating. Bennett does not approve of Venetia Stanley, condemns the laxity with which Asquith confided Cabinet secrets to her (which he would not confide to his wife), and blames her engagement to Edwin Montagu for the emotional turmoil in which Asquith formed his Coalition government in May 1915. This is probably right, but it does scant justice to the problems Asquith faced as Prime Minister, with little practical help from his wife. Margot insisted on treating arguments in Cabinet as evidence of every man's beastliness to Henry

and seems to have encouraged him to take the same view. In fact they were about matters of life and death, mostly death, and the eventual removal of Asquith from office was something far more profound than the set of personal treachery which Margot saw and which is portrayed here.

It is perhaps unreasonable to expect a biography to be a work of history, but it is surely not too much to ask that it should contain. With a stoicism which amounts to perversity, Mrs Bennett has left out all the good stories, on the ground that most of them are untrue. This does not seem to be sufficient reason, especially when the autobiography is quoted so much, and in any case some of them must have been true enough to discuss. This book suffers from an unwarranted solemnity.

Much the same could be said of Jane Abdo and Charlotte Gere's anthology on the Souls. The exercise for this book, apparently, is the quantity of pictures and miscellaneous words of art connected with the coteries which formed around Arthur Balfour and George Curzon in the late 1880s. Margot was one of them. We are told that they were very interesting. It is clear that they lived expensively, in expensive houses. Their time was spent scintillating and fornicating by turns, with the emphasis on the former (except for Harry Cust). Unfortunately nothing of any consequence that any of these snid seems to have been written down. As a result the book is peculiarly stolid. Perhaps life was really like that in the thirty years before the Great War.

The revolutionary habit

D. A. N. Jones

JESSICA MITFORD
Faces of Philip: A memoir of Philip Toynbee
152pp. Heinemann. 29.95.
0434 468229

As a writer, especially as a book reviewer for the *Observer*, Philip Toynbee often seemed rather a solemn fellow, read and appreciated by younger men and women when we were in our more solemn, brow-furrowed moments. In 1953 I planned an experimental novel about three people who turned out to be aspects of the same man: but then I bought Toynbee's *The Garden to the Sea*, found he had done that very thing and abandoned my project. Two years later, I wrote a novel called *The Outsiders*; but then I read Toynbee's review of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*, changed my title and removed all references to Camus's *L'Étranger*. My experience supports Jessica Mitford's contention that Toynbee's work, though not extrinsically popular, exercised a strong influence on readers and ambitious writers. His praise for Colin Wilson's book certainly encouraged younger people to seek out forgotten foreign writers - like Hermann Hesse, who became positively fashionable. His seriousness was almost boyish. While other *Observer* reviewers, Edwin Muir and Harold Nicolson, sounded like experts, Toynbee seemed more like a young student, making discoveries, and he remained so until his death in 1981.

One of Jessica (Decca) Mitford's anecdotes shows him in this light, as an ill-prepared student boning up for an exam. He was supposed to write an obituary of William Faulkner but was unfamiliar with his work and opinions. Decca Mitford told him what to write. She had met Faulkner while busying herself with good left-wing causes in America. "A black man had been unjustly charged, with raping a white woman who was in fact his willing and eager mistress. Faulkner gave Decca a press release denouncing the injustice, but then added his Mississippi judgment on the unlucky couple: 'I think they should both be delayed'." Decca snatched away Faulkner's original statement before he could apologetically dash to her car, crying: "Oh, don't let's put that!"

This example of the Mitfords' grisly sense of humour tells us more about Decca than it does about Toynbee: that is characteristic of this book. Decca Mitford offers three quotations from an article Toynbee wrote about her for the *Radio Times* and she seems tempted to print the whole thing. What Toynbee thought

of the Mitfords (including Esmond Romilly, his close friend and her first husband) is particularly interesting for Decca, and she makes this subject entertaining for the reader. Her principal aim is to show that the solemn man who was jolly good fun until he got religion, and that he was always good for a giggle, was wrapped up in his earlier, more left-wing enthusiasms.

She begins with Toynbee running away from his boarding school, at the age of seventeen. He joins forces with Esmond Romilly, the fifteen-year-old revolutionnary. With letters and diaries she displays the humour of Toynbee and the comedy of his predicaments as a pre-war Communist, as a high-class Tory colonial in India and as an Aldermaston marcher. ("I was rather on the look-out for some suitable girl, you know, khaki shorts rubbing against khaki shorts as we trooped along..."). In 1936, the year of Hungary and Suez, Toynbee was noting in a style that his juniors found too emotional and "thirtysish". In 1968, the year of Czechoslovakia and Vietnam, the *Observer* headlined his commentary (thus: "Philip Toynbee, middle-aged revolutionary, takes a bloody personal look at the student revolt and concludes that the young are right to shout 'NO TOLERABLE!'") (the final word printed in inch-high letters).

Toynbee was like the Yippies of that era. Decca Mitford suggests, in that he really tried to act out his ideas and fears, to put his theories into practice. Expecting a nuclear war in the 1950s he collected "euthanasia medicine" pills to poison his children, and he would solemnly ask other parents what their own plans were for killing their offspring. Then he turned his home into a commune, with an "atmosphere of solar heating, organic food and windmills. However, he did not change his sex though he wrote to Decca in America: 'I have decided to become a nun'. She wrote back: 'How marvellous; that you have decided to become a nun. But I hope you don't get into the habit of it.'"

He was, in fact, spending time and energy with a community of Anglican quakers. He does not pretend to understand his religious conversion, though he recognizes the importance of this event and offers some interesting explanations of it, written from an intelligent agnostic's point of view. But in her merry heart she seems to want to keep Toynbee in the world of the madcap Mitfords; among the revolutionaries and fun-shops who can always enjoy a giggle even if one's humanity is a bit of a fascist. *Faces of Philip* is the story of Philip Toynbee as told by Toynbee.

Exile and history

Julian Roberts

CHRYSOULA KAMBAS
Walter Benjamin im Exil: Zum Verhältnis von Literaturpolitik und Ästhetik
247pp. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
348435013

CHRISTOPH HERING
Die Rekonstruktion der Revolution: Walter Benjamins messianischer Materialismus in den Thesen "Über den Begriff der Geschichte"
218pp. Frankfurt and Bern: Lang.
3820458417

Walter Benjamin's academic legacy is not an entirely happy one. Spurned by the university establishment during his own lifetime, he has always been something of an inspiration to the adventurous and heterodox. At the time of his "rediscovery" during the late 1960s, his image as an outsider seemed to be confirmed by crude but widespread attempts made to discredit him once again. (This even spread to Britain, where the venerable *German Life and Letters* published a dismissive piece by an old school-friend of Benjamin's.) So Benjamin, the heroic loner, the eccentric Marxist, became a focus of attention for the inquisitive and disaffected young. Such a choice of hero was easier than it might be now; for political disaffection, in those halcyon days, did not put people beyond the academic pale. But times have changed, and some of the young researchers who started work on Benjamin during the 1970s have since found themselves sharing his fate more nearly than they perhaps expected.

Meanwhile, however, this often somewhat marginalized group has been presenting its work - much of it of an extremely high standard. Chrysoula Kambas's monograph is an account of Benjamin's work between 1934 and his death in 1940 - the period of his exile in Paris. She concentrates on Benjamin's programme for a materialist aesthetics. She finds this mainly in the manifestos-like essays "The Author as Producer" and "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility", but she also refers extensively to Benjamin's last major writing, the "Theses on History".

Kambas's book is characterized by extreme density of historical reference. She rightly points out the deficiency in this area of much previous writing on Benjamin, which, she says, has tended to abstract his theories from the circumstances of their production and then to submit them to alien conceptual systems. Benjamin's own work - the writings on Baudelaire, for example - did indeed always use a massive amount of empirical evidence; and his principles suggest that we, in our turn, should read his work from within "the historical constellation which made it possible", as Kambas says. She is accordingly scrupulous in her approach to historical detail and the integrity of her evidence. The book incorporates much original and valuable archival research; and, in addition, it almost entirely achieves partisan sniping of the kind which filled many early commentaries on Benjamin.

The question is, however, whether this succeeds any better than the 1960s bricksbats in "actualizing" (or making topical) Benjamin's achievements. Kambas seems to endorse the view, expressed in the "Theses on History", that the work of actualizing a "constellation" rests not merely on method but also on a practical engagement, at some level, by the critic. But she tends to expend most energy precisely in those areas which do not really excite much controversy. She discusses the political events which surrounded Benjamin's exile in Paris in detail, and her comments on his work, from this perspective, are concise and accurate. The problem is that with an *oeuvre* as fragmentary and elusive as Benjamin's, the historical "constellation" which supports it contains not merely pragmatic politics, but also philosophy - the turmoil of contending ideologies. Kambas's extensive references are fairly thin on crucial names like Jung, Heidegger, Kierkegaard. But Benjamin's work was polemical at a relatively theoretical level, and to restore its "actuality" the commentator has surely to be willing to follow the argument at the same level. So while Kambas's book rightly throws down a challenge to those who have attempted to

textualization, it is also an indication of how difficult the process is.

Christoph Hering is one of those un-historical critics explicitly castigated by Kambas. *Die Rekonstruktion der Revolution*, which is his second book on Benjamin, is devoted to a close reading of the "Theses on History". Unabashed by whatever comments the historians may have made, this new book continues much in the style of his first, combining a very economical use of technical apparatus with vigorous assaults on targets such as Adorno, academic Germanists and the like. This stance certainly places him in the older, heroic school of commentary.

Hering's interpretation of the Theses may be seen in this representative sentence: "The perspective of class struggle shakes free from the conformist vision of the past fragments whose 'messianic' structure was hitherto hidden, and it makes quotable again those elements which previously had been condemned to speechlessness." Hering urges that our contemporary historical consciousness is "conformist", and repressive of elements which, if properly brought to consciousness, would be "messianic" in their impulse towards a freer world. If we remembered adequately, we would be in a better position to overcome our economic alienation in political action. Hering's central model, in this argument, is psychoanalysis: once we can articulate our repressed memories of the past, we will be freed to take advantage of the present. The focus of Benjamin's attention, according to Hering, is on the *subject*, understood both as an alienated

individual and as a suffering collective (the Lukácsian "subject of history").

Despite Benjamin's debt to Freud, it is perhaps doubtful whether he owed very much to this "consciousness-raising" kind of model. Indeed, he objected to the aesthetics of Jung, for example, precisely because they remained at that level and treated the achievement of art as the reintegration of repressed archetypes of the collective unconscious. Against this, Benjamin believed that it was his business not merely to remember symbols - that was a function of myth and ritual - but to reclaim earlier missed opportunities. The things remembered by revolutionaries were not just archaic images or heroic tales, but objective structures of not-yet-actualized historical potential.

In this context, Hering's rather undifferentiated account of what exactly we recover from the past seems to miss the full force of what Benjamin attempted. Memory in general is no liberator. What is vital, in Benjamin's view, is the recovery of those quite specific moments where some political possibility could not be realized. The recovery of such a hope requires not dreamy reminiscence, but the clear identification of lost and half-formed structures, the "actualization" of what Benjamin, following Leibniz quite closely, called "monads".

Hering's comments on Leibniz are scanty, and he almost entirely ignores the crucial targets of Benjamin's polemic. These omissions are problematic, and though the book is sympathetic and stimulating, Benjamin studies are perhaps now in greater need of philological and historical *akribia* of Kambas's sort.

Picturing the Critique

R. C. S. Walker

GORDON NAGEL
The Structure of Experience
284pp. University of Chicago Press. £23.35.
0226 567664

Kant is often thought to be obscure. His undeciphered no underlying confusion of mind, but he himself conceded that his mode of expression was not always perfect. Writers on Kant tend either to aim for extreme clarity in their exposition, running the risk of distorting by oversimplification, or else to sacrifice clarity of detail in order better to capture what they take to be the spirit of the whole. Gordon Nagel belongs in this second category; his approach is pictorial and persuasive rather than analytic and precise.

Like most of those who write books on Kant, he sees himself not only as interpreting Kant's system, but as thereby showing it to be a decisive contribution to present-day philosophical debate. He takes Kant's account of the phenomenal world to be broadly holistic in character, and to embody a "three-element theory of the mind". The holism I shall return to; the duality - as familiar now as in Kant's time - between active reason and the passive data of sense. The third element is Understanding, which is apparently enabled to mediate between Reason and Sense by the fact that the data of sense are synthetically structured. Nagel is right to stress that the claim that sensory experience is ordered by the mind, even at the most elementary level, is one of Kant's most important theses; but (despite a chapter on schemata) he fails to make clear exactly how this helps to solve problems about the application either of categories or of other concepts. Nor are matters much advanced by a curious and laboured analogy between the three-element theory and language; the physical sign is said to correspond to Sense, the representation of meanings to Understanding, while the subtler interpretation of a text or an author's supposedly parallel to Reason with its speculative suppositions in themselves. Here, as in most of the book, one may well feel that Nagel's heart is in the right place. But he gives us a picture where what we need is precision: a clear statement of just what a given Kantian thesis or argument amounts to. When he tries to do this, Nagel is too frequently too

Sometimes the reasons for the obscurity are partly terminological. A large part of the book suddenly became comprehensible to me when I realized that by "truth-functional" Nagel means or perhaps "susceptible of truth-value" - a somewhat unorthodox usage, possibly connected with his surprising assumption that the analysis of "If P then Q" is equivalent to "Either not-P or Q" is self-evidently correct, and is recognized to be so by Kant. Sometimes, again, obscurities may be due to something's not having been thought through far enough. As with the language analogy just mentioned. One must also suspect, however, that some of the obscurities are due to confusion in thought. One such obscurity appears when one looks at the holism that Nagel ascribes to Kant.

He points out that Kant saw our knowledge of the phenomenal world as largely a matter of coherence: judgments about what is presently before us, for example, may need amending in the light of the inductions we have made, though these were themselves based on experience and remain open to correction on empirical grounds. That much, indeed, seems both Kantian and true; what is more difficult is to say whether there is - either for Kant or in reality - a special class of judgments, peculiarly immune to mistake, on which the rest can be collectively grounded. It is plausible to think that Kant accepted such a class, though the matter is not quite straightforward. Nagel rejects this. But his supposedly Kantian argument against the incorrigibility of sense-datum judgments is that the orderliness of nature places constraints on what can occur in the physical world, and may require us to correct what we say about it. Since sense-datum judgments do not make any claim about the physical world this appears to involve a confusion between two kinds of judgment about experience. That confusion is not to be found in Kant.

A second, revised and updated edition of Antony Flew's one-volume *A Dictionary of Philosophy* will be published next week (380pp, Macmillan. £25.0333 369777). This is by far the best of the small dictionaries of philosophy currently available, catholic, wide-ranging and, usefully, "heavily cross-referenced". It is to be hoped that students will look here rather than in the *OED* for a definition of *a priori*. They may even gain some understanding of the relations between all the "isms" that jostle each other in the limited space of philosophy.

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Where there's a wall

Ann Sieveking

CAMPBELL GRANT
The Rock Art of the North American Indians
62pp. with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Cambridge University Press. £12.95.

0521 254434
MARY LEAKEY
Africa's Vanishing Art: The rock paintings of Tanzania
128pp. Hamish Hamilton. £30.

0241 11103X
J. DAVID LEWIS-WILLIAMS
The Rock Art of Southern Africa
68pp. with colour and black-and-white illustrations. Cambridge University Press. £12.95.

0521 244019
A. R. WILLCOX
The Rock Art of Africa
287pp. Croom Helm. £45.

07099 27436

One of these books on rock art is concerned with North America, the other three with Africa. Campbell Grant's *The Rock Art of the North American Indians* is an introductory essay; but it is authoritative and succeeds in giving a historical and geographical background to a great complexity of art groups. North America is here divided into nine regions, each further sub-divided by tribal or topographic determinations. Some mural art in Mexico (which, as yet, has not been well documented) perhaps has a date but most of the paintings and petroglyphs belong to our own era. They are of interest to both historians and ethnographers, including, for example, such scenes as a punitive raid by Spaniards on horseback, undertaken against the Navajo in 1774, and wild sheep being hunted by dogs, but

to an art historian they are less interesting, for much of this essentially pictographic art consists of motifs simplified to the point of abstraction.

There are exceptions to the uniformity of undistinguished "rock writings", notably the decorative shapes elaborated by multiple outlines produced by the Chumash Indians and the naturalistic painting found in Baja California. Many of the motifs used on rock-shelter walls appear more suited to basket-work or pottery, and one has the impression that rock art was, in most regions of North America, a subsidiary form. The motifs have been interpreted variously as clan, plaitic, puberty or fertility symbols and have also been thought to record visions, prayers and supplications for success in the hunt. Grant points out that we have little direct knowledge of the beliefs of tribes such as the Chumash because, in the interval between the heyday of the Indians and the interest taken in them by twentieth-century man, their culture was destroyed by missionary zeal. Today, the visible traces of lost beliefs are under threat from vandals with pickaxes or spray-cans as well as from the continuous depredations of the weather.

Africa's Vanishing Art: The rock paintings of Tanzania has, in fact, the theme of conservation as its *raison d'être*. Mary Leakey tells us that "Some of the originals are now irretrievably damaged and my reproductions are the only record of their existence". The rock-shelter paintings that the Leakeys studied are restricted to the Kondoa district of Central Tanzania, the text is short and descriptive, the drawings, which are the core of the book, are beautifully reproduced and if the few good colour photographs included inspire a wish for a full photographic record, that is not to detract from Mrs Leakey's contribution to rescue archaeology and rock art studies.

The Rock Art of Southern Africa is also a study of a regional group. In this instance the

huge area once occupied by the San or Bushman tribes. Their achievement, like that of the European Upper Palaeolithic, is aesthetic; South Africa has been called "the richest storehouse of prehistoric art in the world" and its paintings and engravings are not only abundant, but beautiful. They are also perhaps explicable, through a study of the exceptional ethnographic records of Bushman life and thought that were made in the 1870s, before the demise of the last artists. That Bushman art is uniform in time and space is relevant to its interpretation: myths known to be widespread can be recognized in the art; and quantitative analyses can elucidate the formulae that operate in rock-shelter decoration, whether in choice of subject, arrangement of figures or technique of painting, while social fluidity must account for its wide distribution. In art, as in belief, the eland has a peculiar importance for the Bushman and in the paintings the metaphorical association between dying eland and man-in-a-trance achieves its own potency. On the shelter walls such depictions appear, with time, to have accumulated relevant additions in the form of juxtapositions and superimpositions, a situation that has its parallel in Palaeolithic art.

Bushman art is a rich field for research and is now attracting the attention of archaeologists with new analytical approaches, for whom intuitive explanations are no longer acceptable. David Lewis-Williams's book is not only an

introduction to the art of the region but also his own, and other scholars' work in this field. It is a pity that the standard of production in *The Rock Art of Southern Africa* does not equal that of the text; the scale is missing from several figures, one figure (5) is missing altogether and the colour reproduction hardly does justice to the photographs. These are minor defects, but unnecessary.

A. R. Willcox's *The Rock Art of Africa* is more comprehensive work of reference and there is ground he has not covered, his extensive bibliography will probably remedy the omission. Physical and climatic background, history, the transcontinental movements of people and an analysis of all art groups from the Malgheh in the Cape are included and the book is liberally illustrated with maps, figures and photographs. Willcox discusses both theory and interpretation, but his main interest is in documentation rather than speculation. There must be many archaeologists, though, who would disagree with his assertion that there exist only two classic interpretations of prehistoric art, as either food-procuring magic or art for art's sake. Willcox believes that "Pleasure in the exercise of skill is the basic motive for the creation of all art; and a sufficient, alone, to account for most of it". As a point of view, but how much poorer the subject would be without the revealing theories of André Leroi-Gourhan or Lewis Williams.

The craftsmen's city

Crispin Tickell

RICHARD A. DIEHL
Tula: The Toltec capital of Ancient Mexico
184pp. Thames and Hudson. £16.

0500 390185

The Aztecs attributed almost mythical virtue to the people who preceded them in dominating central Mexico. The Toltecs, with their legendary capital Tollan, were a race of heroes larger than life, who, in the words of the sixteenth-century Spanish historian, Bernardino de Sahagun, were "wise, learned and experienced" and whose "works were all good, all perfect, all wonderful, all marvellous". Just as noble Aztec families sought to give their genealogies Toltec beginnings, so Aztec sculptors and architects copied Toltec models and looted the site of Tollan to adorn their own capital Tenochtitlan in the islands of the lake on which the modern city of Mexico is built.

For many years it was uncertain where Tollan really was. The only ruled city which came near the accounts of the Aztecs was Teotihuacan, some thirty miles to the north. But the geography did not fit. Teotihuacan was anyway dying by 800 AD, and although all pre-Columbian societies had much in common, its characteristics were very different from those held to be Toltec. Tollan was eventually identified as Tula, a site further to the north and bigger than at first supposed. As a successor state to Teotihuacan, Tula exercised predominance in the Mexican plateau from around 950 to around 1200 AD, when it too collapsed and fell into ruin. It was never on the same scale as its predecessor Teotihuacan nor its successor Tenochtitlan. At its apogee it probably had a population of around 30,000. But its influence stretched over not only the plateau but also distant Yucatan, where the famous site of Chichen Itza now outshines Tula itself.

Richard Diehl and his colleagues from the University of Missouri-Columbia have worked for more than ten years at Tula, in co-operation with a Mexican group from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. In common with other archaeologists, such as Norman Hammond in Belize, they have focused their efforts on elucidation of the economy which gave Toltec society its being: its agriculture, its artefacts and its trade. The excavation of domestic houses away from the great ceremonial centres has yielded fascinating but tantalizingly incomplete results. Some problems have been solved but many more have thereby been created. The site itself is unpromising. Even if it was less arid and unproductive than it is today, it must always have lacked the compo-

lan. But it made up for deficiencies through trade and tribute, and in its best days must have supported a skilled population of potters, masons, sculptors, jewellers and other workers, who together gave the word "Toltec" its meaning. Above them came the structure of government, priests, soldiers and merchants, much, we suspect, as in the Aztec society which developed and destroyed by the standards 300 years later.

Despite the heroic virtues attributed by the Aztecs to them, the Toltecs do not emerge as an attractive people. They were more millenarian than their predecessors, and almost certainly practised human sacrifice on a large scale. Their architecture was grandiose but lacked subtlety in its execution. Tula was so thoroughly looted by the Aztecs that what remains cannot be a fair sample, but generally Toltec sculpture seems crude and lumpy, and the pottery uninspired. If Toltec society had established itself on a surer base and lasted longer, more civilization might have crept in. As it was, it suffered breakdown of the same mysterious kind as other pre-Columbian societies. In seeking to elucidate the reasons, Professor Diehl elaborates on the work done by Nigel Davies from documentary as well as archaeological sources. We may never know the combination of factors, internal and external, which brought down these agricultural, essentially stone age societies, but they were peculiarly vulnerable to natural hazards, in particular climatic variation, and their institutions were ill-equipped to cope with such problems as the increasing population and corresponding demands on the environment.

This is a useful book with the virtue of being based on original and loving research. The photographs and plans are well chosen. But for so relatively short a work, two forewords, a preface and an introduction seem excessive. More use of documentary sources early on would have helped set the background. It would have been useful to analyse the singularities of Toltec art and its place in the pre-Columbian tradition. Some modest, imaginative extrapolation from what is known of Aztec society would also have given a stronger sense of what it felt like to live in that remote society and to be a Toltec. But in general Diehl has given a clear, uncoloured and workmanlike account of Tula and its people, and thereby added to our knowledge of the Toltecs.

Prehistoric Indian Rock Paintings by Evelyn Naumeyer (199pp. Delhi: Oxford University Press. £30. 0 10 561387 2) makes a detailed artistic, historical and socio-religious examination of the little-studied Indian rock paintings

Cultural-ecological-evolutionary

Paul Henley

RAYMOND B. HAMES and WILLIAM T. VICKERS (Editors)
Adaptive Responses of Native Amazonians
517pp. Academic Press. £32.40

0123212502
EMILIO F. MORAN (Editor)
The Dilemma of Amazonian Development
347pp. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press (distributed by Bowker) £21.75.

0865313733
JENNA JACKSON
The Fish People: Linguistic exogamy and Tukanoan identity in Northwest Amazonia
287pp. Cambridge University Press. £25.

0521 239234

North American anthropology embraces a wide range of theories, from unrepentant inductionism in the Boas mould to the *demerit* of post-Lacanian structuralism. But amidst this theoretical kaleidoscope lies an approach to the study of society that can lay a strong claim to be distinctively North American since almost all its exponents have been anthropologists who have worked or trained in the United States. In contrast, "cultural ecology", as the approach was dubbed by Julian Steward, has produced relatively little resonance amongst European scholars.

As formulated by Steward, the fundamental tenet of cultural ecology is that human societies are obliged, just as biological organisms are, to adapt themselves to the natural environment in which they live. Thus, in order to explain any particular society's social institutions, it is necessary to show how they have contributed to this process of adaptation, disregarding, if necessary, any more immediate explanations proffered by the members of the society in question. Steward's formulations were based, by analogy, on the theory of evolution, now rejected by most biologists and, in tune with the spirit of the times, some of his conclusions have given his ideas a neo-Darwinian twist. Others have injected a Marxist component. But despite these modifications, and notwithstanding their considerable internal dissonance, all present-day evolutionary ethnologists, cultural materialists and "optimal-foraging" theorists share with Steward the belief that the royal road to the understanding of social life lies in the relationship of man to the natural environment.

As one might expect, given that the region lies in North American anthropology's backyard, the ecological approach has played an important role in the development of Amazonian anthropology over the past three decades. But the theories of the first generation of ecological anthropologists were too ambitious: grandiose scenarios detailing the rise and fall of civilizations were constructed from the results of a few small-scale archaeological excavations at opposite ends of the main channel of the Amazon; theories about the origin of the state were developed from samples of the soil in a couple of wildland plots on the upper reaches of one of its tributaries; a bleak prognostication about mankind's inherent propensity to warfare were derived from studies of the Yanomama, a group living near the headwaters of the Orinoco, who could not be considered representative of Amazonia; let alone the whole of the human species.

But a second generation is now emerging which, aware of the weaknesses underlying the work of its predecessors, has been systematically improving the data-base on which ecological theories might be propounded. The results of some of this work, as well as some of the theoretical developments associated with it, are presented in *Adaptive Responses of Native Amazonians*. The contributions deal with all the principal modes of subsistence of aboriginal Amazonians - hunting, fishing and swidden agriculture - and in the concluding sections, examining their effects on nutritional status and settlement patterns. Most of the contributions are from scholars who have completed their doctoral dissertations since the latter half of the 1970s and a tone of optimism about the new vistas opened up by Amazonian ecological studies recurs throughout the book.

continuing aboriginal occupation in Amazonia and will be of interest to all Amazonia specialists whatever their theoretical inclinations. Also, the book begins with a most useful review by the editors of the region's ecological characteristics and of the various theories advanced to account for human adaptations to these. But the discrepancy between the database and the theoretical ambitions of the authors, now mostly oriented towards establishing the validity of sociobiological or other evolutionary ecological theses, remains considerable. Confronted with dissonant results, most of the contributors opt for reaffirming their faith in the general laws of ecology to explain human behaviour whilst calling for yet more data. But the sceptical reader will find little evidence here to shake him in the belief that environmental factors impose nothing more than the most ill-defined and remote constraints on human behaviour.

A number of the contributors to *The Dilemma of Amazonian Development*, including the editor, Emilio Moran, come from the same ecological anthropology background as the contributors to the Hames and Vickers volume. (Indeed both Moran and Vickers have papers in both collections.) Moran's writing

has been criticized for overemphasizing the importance of deficiencies in resource management *in situ* at the expense of wider political and economic factors when attempting to explain the shortcomings of the programmes of Amazonian colonization presently being pursued by the modern nation states of the region. In this collection however, in addition to contributions by ecologists and anthropologists, he has included some interesting papers by economists and political sociologists.

This is the first multidisciplinary volume on Amazonia since *Land, People and Planning*, the collection of papers from the 1979 Cambridge symposium edited by Françoise Barbira-Scazzocchio, and it therefore asks to be compared with the latter. Although the Moran volume does not have the same breadth of coverage, it fills some of the most significant gaps in the earlier collection, most notably with regard to the Yuniaguan agricultural experiments and Amazonian fisheries. But, apart from a concluding article by Dennis J. Maher bringing the record up to date on the Jarí, Carajás and Polonoreste projects, the volume is something of a pot-boller with little that will be new to specialist readers. Moreover, the quality of the contributions is somewhat eclectic, ranging from the highly competent to the very weak. There is also a degree of eclecticism about the opinions expressed: whereas all the other contributors are pessimistic about the future, Maher, a World Bank economist, concludes that "the prospects for Amazonian development are brighter than they have ever been".

Jean Jackson represents a completely different strand of contemporary North American anthropology in that her theoretical allegiances are to social psychology and sociolinguistics rather than to biology or ecology. First and foremost, though, *The Fish People* is a monographic study of the Bará, one of a dozen distinct Tukanoan language-groups of the North-west Amazon who, by virtue of an extraordinary rule of linguistic exogamy, are bound together into a regional system of unusual complexity for Amazonia. Although it is a competent and very readable study, it inevitably lies in the shadow of the remarkably detailed and comprehensive monographs of Stephen and Christine Hugh-Jones on the Barasana, close neighbours in the Bará and culturally very similar. As Jackson herself very properly acknowledges, her debt to the Hugh-Joneses in terms of both ethnographic information and of analytical insight is "immeasurable". Even so, some readers may find *The Fish People* a more accessible introduction to North-west Amazon society precisely because it is analytically less sophisticated than the Hugh-Joneses' books and also because it emphasizes that no one Tukanoan group can be fully understood in isolation from the regional system of which it forms a part.

This regional system in the North-west Amazon poses an interesting challenge both to evolutionary ecologists and to those of a more intellectualist persuasion. Much historical work remains to be done, but it is clear that the present social configuration of the region is a mere shadow of the elaborate social system which underpinned it in the last century. Ecological anthropologists have tended to argue that aboriginal social systems of such complexity were necessarily confined to the *várzea*, the nutrient-rich environment adjacent to the Amazon and the other white-water rivers. But the North-west Amazon is a nutrient-poor region, of predominantly black-water rivers. Clearly more data is needed to resolve this apparent paradox. Perhaps greater theoretical sophistication is required also.



Gertrude Blom's photograph of a Lacandon (a group of Maya Indians who inhabit lowland jungle on the Mexican/Guatemalan border) man and his wife, reproduced from Gertrude Blom Bearing Witness, edited by Alex Harris and Margaret Sauter (150pp. University of North Carolina Press. £30. 0 8078 15977).

Runa and ruins

Dervla Murphy

RONALD WRIGHT
Cut Stones and Crossroads: A journey in the two worlds of Peru
239pp. Viking. £9.95.

0670 693812

Not everyone is enthralled by descriptions of granite ashlar, flat stelae and cellular masonry. It would however be a huge mistake to pass over *Cut Stones and Crossroads* because its archaeologist author, planned his journey around the ruins of Peru's extinct civilizations. Ronald Wright is a superb travel writer with a vivid historical imagination. To him, Chavin, La Chocla, Kuelap, and so on, are not only professional challenges, to be carefully carbon-dated and neatly catalogued according to period. He sees them, and feels about them, as exciting links with a series of mysteriously elaborate civilizations, which left no written record. The nameless human beings whose sophisticated cultures created the magnificent architecture of the Andes are as important to Mr Wright as the ruins themselves. And the present-day descendants of those people are, in this book, most important of all.

Wright describes "the two worlds of Peru" with vigour, enthusiasm, affection and a sad, controlled anger. In the Andes one is journeying not only among archaeological ruins but among the human ruins of a well-ordered social system that was smashed to bits, within a decade, by European. The underlying ecological chaos of the Andes, the slowly grinding chewing groups of campesinos, slowly turning the land into a desert, is a stark reality. The book is a journey into the heart of the Andes, a journey that is as much a journey into the past as it is a journey into the present.

seem like living witnesses to a 450-year-old crime. They have the aura of a race without a future and Wright, explains why:

To a superficial glance, Peru is a racist nation: people are known as whites (criollos), mestizos, or Indians, in that order of prestige. . . But the criteria for defining these groups are predominantly ethnic and cultural. Most mestizos are in fact of almost pure Indian descent; taken as a whole, Peru's population must be at least 80 per cent native in its genetic make-up. . . But acquisition of Western dress, Spanish language, and Latin values (for example, criollo pop music, a macho attitude towards women, and shiny shoes) will convert an Indian into a mestizo. This "ethnicism" is a far more effective strategy for domination than the crude racism of Anglo-Saxon countries. . . A Canadian Indian is always an Indian. But in Peru there is no such thing as an educated Peruvian (Indian). Since the destruction of the native aristocracy at the end of the eighteenth century, there has been no model of the Indian as anything other than a backward peasant. The very process of education (in Spanish, of course) converts the successful Runa into a mestizo; advancement costs him his *Runa*.

Readers who favour conventionally structured travel books may have a little trouble adjusting to Wright's informal technique. At first *Cut Stones and Crossroads* seems like an exuberant traveller's notebook, crammed with a jumble of shrewd observations - on literature, people, landscapes, music, weather, languages, towns, politics, vegetation, ruins, meals, religious customs, transport difficulties. Soon, however, one realizes that any apparent incoherence in these pages is intentional. The soundness and range of Wright's knowledge impose all the order that is necessary to weave a multitude of experiences into a fascinating though melancholy tapestry. He can afford to write as casually as he travelled, sometimes taking a bus, a plane, a taxi, sometimes hitch-

hiking or walking or riding. Although this book records his most recent Peruvian journey, it is strongly reinforced by earlier travels through the Andes which enabled Mr Wright to learn Quechua - which he prefers to call Runasimi, the Indians' own word for the lingua franca of the Inca Empire. He notes that "languages shape, and are shaped by, culture as a whole. When people lose their language for another, profound distortions may affect their visions of the world." His own fluency in Runasimi undoubtedly contributed a great deal to this extraordinarily perceptive interpretation of the "two worlds of Peru".

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Fantastic diagrams

William Feaver

HELEN NICOLL and JAN PIENKOWSKI
Owl at School
0434 954314
Mog in the Fog
0434 954306
Heinemann, £3.95.

Meg the wiry witch and Nog her familiar, a black-and-white-striped cat with a tail like a frayed bootlace, are the perfect couple: one the animator with startling abilities, the other easily rattled. Like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, Dan Dare and Digby, Meg and Mog need each other. Meg stops Meg being entirely flyaway. Meg makes Mog's hair stand on end.

Jan Pienkowski likes to give the impression of composing straight from the typescript. "CRUNCH", it says, in red, as Snowy the young owl crashes ("Ooops!") into a bright green conifer. "Crashed again!" Mog observes, and Meg, who always knows best, has the answer: "He'll have to go to school." *Mog in the Fog* begins even more simply "Goodbye Owl". Meg says to the chastened Snowy as she achieves lift-off on her broomstick with Mog and a cooking-pot as payload. The owl, trapped in the house, says nothing, but looks doleful. The sky is blue, the blossom is candyfloss and the objective lies on the next page. "Mog wanted to climb the highest mountain in the world."

Helen Nicoll's texts are admirably minimal. Whether it is Snowy learning to cope with owlhood or Meg and Mog and Sherpa Tsing making their way up an Everest that appears to have come off a Primula cheese packet, the developments are kept strictly logical and the surprises are mostly visual. One at a time the skies, the mountains, the mysteries as the fog descends and the Astonishing Snowman joins the party. Jan Pienkowski's style is part childish, part jolly-well-anarchic. He has no reverence for pictorial conventions. Frieze figures turn

into silhouettes, bristle into graffiti violence and subside into bland reassurance. Sometimes the skies are shocking pink instead of intense blue. Often what at first looks a blank page proves to be a cavern or forest. The fog is solid grey.

Imitators of Pienkowski—children as well as misguided adults—tend to overlook his subtleties. Meg may always be a thing of shreds and pipecleaners—that's her privilege—but the rest of the characters alter according to circumstances. Snowy's eyes register round-the-clock anxiety. Household objects are drawn clearly enough to remind one of the letters of the alphabet (B for Butter, M for Mug); the fantastic events are diagrammatic, as a rule, hinting perhaps that geometry is the key to the mysteries.

When Pienkowski piles on the effects—in his brilliant pop-up *The Hunched House*, for example, and the companion volume on robots—the style becomes formidably mechanistic. Limbs are always primitive and forms are lumpy, as in late Philip Guston. In the Meg and Mog books, though, fat lines and thin lines are played off against each other. Bubblegum lettering on the front covers competes with blackboard writing. Mog's electric whiskers and Meg's skimpy hair are contrasted with the plump bodies of the figures.

All sorts of games are developed from the standard element of comic strips. As in Hergé's Tintin, the speech balloons bulge and shiver in reaction to the words they contain. What initially strikes one as being all too straightforward always proves to be complicated enough to sustain interest over many readings until the book is worn out.

Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski have established a robust set of conventions. Their thin, square books are post-Seuss in attitude: Dick Bruna primers are bland and where Pienkowski (with "Good Ol' Charley Brown") is for solutes, the Meg and Mog stories seize hold. Meg works her magic, Mog reacts and the audience joins in.

Unnerving suggestions

Neil Philip

SUSAN DICKINSON (Editor)
The Restless Ghost
318pp. Collins, £5.95
000 1952722

A ghostly encounter is preserved in Robert Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England*.

He turned his great grey face on me, glared abroad his great eyes, opened his mouth, and it was a month sure out. Then I saw pieces of sea-weed and bits of sticks in his whiskers, the flesh of his face and hands were parboiled, just like a woman's hands after a good day's washing. Well, I did not like his looks a bit, and sheered off; but he followed close by my side, and I could hear the water squashing in his shoes every step he took.

The ghost in this story does not do anything to justify the narrator's terror. The chill lies in what might have happened, not what did. There, perhaps, is the difference between ghost and horror stories: the difference between a hint and a direct statement.

In her anthology, *The Restless Ghost*, first published in 1970, Susan Dickinson gathered together a group of stories in which what is suggested always outweighs what is shown. What is there to mark Alan Garner's "Feel Free" as a ghost story at all, save the implied answer to Sandro's "Shall I see you next time round?" as Brian moves away into the Tunnel of Love? In several of these tales, for instance W.F. Harvey's insidious "August Heat", the true climax occurs in the reader's imagination, when the print has stopped. The most explicit story, H.P. Lovecraft's "The Moon Bog", is also less satisfying.

Garner's "Feel Free" and Leon Garfield's "The Restless Ghost" are the prizes of the collection, for neither is available elsewhere and both represent their authors at an intriguing point in their development. "Feel Free" is intimately linked in language and theme to

unmade television script. It tentatively establishes one linguistic strand of the novel that was to follow it, *Red Shift*. The theme, as in so many ghost stories, is the mystery of time. "The Restless Ghost" marked the first appearance of Garfield's comic duo Bostock and Harris, and holds a fine balance between fear and laughter.

The other stories include Joan Aiken's light-hearted "The Apple of Trouble", in which the Funties turn up on a present-day doorstep with vengeance in mind; two minatory tales by that underrated writer William Croft Dickinson, including an early "haunted computer" story, "His Own Number"; and representative stories by H.G. Wells, M.R. James, Nigel Kneale and other amateurs of what E.F. Benson calls "the shaded side of things".

Benson's contribution, "The Bus Conductor", is a version, expanded to fit the conventions of the literary ghost story, of an anecdote in oral circulation, commonly referred to by the key sentence, spoken by a sepulchral driver, "Room for One More". This driver delivers the warning in a night vision of a hearse, then reappears in the daytime as a lift attendant or (as in Benson's story) bus-conductor. His face and words alert the person who saw the hearse to an impending accident, and he or she draws back in time. All those in the lift or bus are killed. Augustus Hare records a version that locates the warning vision at Glamis Castle.

The best story in the book is Stevenson's "The Bottle Imp", as perfectly shaped and compelling as the traditional tales he was imitating. It is a shame, when Stevenson's language is so rhythmical and expressive, so nicely judged, that two errors in Susan Dickinson's text have been left uncorrected in this new edition.

Since this book first appeared several children's writers, notably Philippa Pearce and John Gordon, have played subtle, enriching changes on the model of the literary ghost story, perfected by M.R. James, the model to which

Unsentimental invitations

Blake Morrison

KIT WRIGHT
Poems for 9-Year-Olds and Under
Illustrated by Michael Foreman
191pp. Kestrel, £5.95
07226 57900

Kit Wright is a much-admired writer of children's and adult verse, and a natural choice for an anthologist. Humorous without being facetious, keen on traditional forms but unstuffy about prosaic departures, well versed (it seems) in the silliness of children but careful not merely to pander to them—clearly he has the right credentials. The same, unfortunately, cannot be said of the series to which his anthology belongs: the drolly titled *Poems for 9-Year-Olds and Under* comes in the wake of *Poems for 7-Year-Olds and Under*, a fine distinction indeed and one that makes little sense except commercially. But Wright has stuck to his task and produced a lively, eclectic unassuming book, which offers a refreshing break from more staid anthologies.

Not that Wright has perversely avoided the canon. Lear, Carroll and A.A. Milne are here, as are Christina Rossetti, Walter de la Mare and Charles Causley. But Lear is represented, not by "The Quangle Wangle's Hat" but its lesser-known offshoot "The Pobble Who Has No Toes", and de la Mare not by "Up Tails Down Tails" but by "Tom's Little Dog". If the book is free of the Pooh-and-Paddington cosiness that tends to infect English anthologies, that is in part because Wright has made a point of drawing on American children's poetry. Robert Frost contributes the opening piece, "The Pasture" (with its unsentimental invitation "you come too") and e.e. cummings the sinisterly hissing "Chanson Innocente II" (with the threatening, twiggish witches, itchy moiries and hob-a-no-bob goblins), and there are several lesser-known United States contributors, of whom Laura E. Richards' "A Legend of Lake Okefenokee" is outstanding. Anon figures largely, but also the semi-anonymous, those not often met with in anthologies. An indication of Wright's wide pawling can be found in the acknowledgments page, which indicates that several of the poems have not previously been published in book form.

Many of the choices take the conventional have been smoothed away too efficiently. Sam is forgetful, with an air of forgetting about people just as he overlooks cameras set in cars and film dropped in the street. Jenny's more meticulous, and has kept, in particular, their family relationships—with a nicely drawn array of parents and grandparents—in good repair. Unconsciously, she tames the slightly feckless Sam into a sense of responsibility: there is some pleasant play with the idea that learning the value of a person goes along with learning a visual sense that will make the young man a better photographer. Townsend is too subtle to end his novel with either the ideal happy conclusion or some charming disaster: and the mishaps and coincidences along his path unobtrusively catch the apparently casual feel of adolescent living.

Yet the manipulation of the plot to bring these two finally together relies on the fitting of some corners, and more than a little contrivance in some minor characters. Sam fails to see that the sexy, ambitious Elaine from his photography class would scoop his job (even if she doesn't win the prize) by using her good looks in the newspaper office; and so does his reader. The narrative has to pass rapidly over some important considerations of geography and money to keep Sam and Jenny meeting. Sam's poly, and his aunt's household, are more routine and stereotyped background than the middle-class settings in which Jenny moves, and with such ease. Sketchiness of detail does not always matter in fiction if the central theme is true. But such delicate social matters are crucial to the success of this likeable novel, in its attempts to be something more, and more than, the obscure sense of disapproval that comes from a

rites of children's poetry: nonsense poems, rhymes and jingles, cumulative memory poems like "There was an old woman who swallowed a fly", animals both real (Ogden Nash's "The song of canaries / Never varies, / And when they're notling / They're pretty revolting") and imaginary (the marrog, the multikarago), the experience of eating disgusting foods, putting up with eccentric relatives. But Wright's own poetry is notable for its bias: comedy and this gives a special edge to his selection, which is not afraid to admit that fear, malice, rivalry, mockery, banality and dread play their part in the world of the child. In Carey Blyton's "Night Starvation" Uncle Rufus, reaching for his false teeth on the huge backside, in a poem by Ronald Wright leaves no room for passengers in his Rob Royce; and when James Fenton's tipsy mouse is spotted by an owl—"clunk", Michael Foreman's illustrations are especially good in bringing out the book's humour: when in one poem a father falls asleep while reading a bedtime story to his son, the boy's malicious gleam finding himself in power over his parent is perfectly captured.

There are indulgent moments, particularly with contemporaries. Leonard Clark, Michael Rosen and Roger McGough are perhaps inevitable in anthologies of this kind, but that jaded alongside the ebullient Spike Milligan Tom Pickard's in-joke about meeting Jeff Ne-tall coming up on the down escalator (and vice versa) hardly earns its place; Michael Baldwin's malodorous Yeti is no longer funny when cracks about BO seem as distant as advertisements for Pepsodent; and several poems are too much about being poems. Above all, there are too many poems about cats: Wright is a good company, of course, catosty being a prevalent among today's poets as it was in Eliot's day (Peter Porter, George Mackay Brown and Gavin Ewart are notable examples). But even if you are not a cat person, about four too many.

No children's anthology could hope to rival Ted Hughes's and Seamus Heaney's *Rattle Bag*. Wright does not make the mistake of trying to compete: his readership is confined to a younger age-group, and his selection is slimmer. But he has come up with a book which in its own quiet way is just as quirky and distinctive.

Not rough enough

Alan Brownjohn

JOHN ROWE TOWNSEND
Cloudy Bright
154pp. Kestrel, £5.50
07226 58699

The narrative in John Rowe Townsend's new novel for teenagers is shared, in brief alternating chapters, between the two main characters; and the tale is thus a little reminiscent of the method adopted in John Fowles's *The Collector*. For Jenny Midhurst (whose name and residence lie far to the affluent south), the trip from home in Surrey to Brighton, where she meets Sam Horsfall from Bradford, three years older and a polytechnic student studying photography, is a tentative venture into what might become a relationship, though she can't be sure. Sam is certainly not out to put her in a collection of girls, but for him the encounter is nothing more than an excellent chance to borrow Jenny's camera and take shots for a competition which might land him a job.

Jenny is therefore the emotional innocent, and Sam the opportunist who will—or so he thinks—use her for his own purposes. But the outcome is far more reassuring than in Fowles's parable of beauty destroyed, and for that matter more comfortable than much current teenage fiction. The genre continues to be a difficult one in which to steer a middle course between glib sophistication and an unconvincing skirting of the issues. Only the most adroit and sensitive of treatments keeps it alive as a valid form of offering for readers in this age group. *Cloudy Bright* is written with this author's usual skill and honesty, and with some

have been smoothed away too efficiently.

Sam is forgetful, with an air of forgetting about people just as he overlooks cameras set in cars and film dropped in the street. Jenny's more meticulous, and has kept, in particular, their family relationships—with a nicely drawn array of parents and grandparents—in good repair. Unconsciously, she tames the slightly feckless Sam into a sense of responsibility: there is some pleasant play with the idea that learning the value of a person goes along with learning a visual sense that will make the young man a better photographer. Townsend is too subtle to end his novel with either the ideal happy conclusion or some charming disaster: and the mishaps and coincidences along his path unobtrusively catch the apparently casual feel of adolescent living.

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Letters

the tax-farming system, but the episode is probably truncated.

The common misapprehension that the Pharisees' objection to tax-collectors was a matter of ritual purity is based on a misreading of the Mishnah, which says (Tohorot, 7:6), "If targeaters entered a house all that is in it becomes unclean." This does not mean that tax-gatherers were held to exude a special kind of uncleanness. Their uncleanness was simply that of all ordinary persons who were not *haberim*, i.e. had not made a special undertaking to keep an unusual standard of ritual purity. The Mishnah passage concerns only the house of a *haber*. Ordinary visitors who entered a house in the absence of its owner could be trusted not to handle the contents, but tax-collectors were assumed in such a case to have handled everything in assessing the wealth of the owner.

Jesus' attempt to win over the tax-collectors to a better way of life was thus in no way opposed to the outlook of any other religious Jews. Some Pharisees may have objected on the ground that association with desperate criminals was more likely to affect Jesus' character for the worse than theirs for the better; but Jesus' nationwide campaign of repentance in preparation for the Messianic era was too bold to be affected by such considerations.

HYAM MACCOBY,
Leo Baeck College, 80 East End Road, London N3.

'Sir John Did His Duty'

Sir, Your reviewer's reverence for the Australian constitution (Letters, June 29) is misplaced, as he hurries, like Sir Garfield Barwick, to take refuge in legalisms. The "constitution" is actually part of a Free Trade Act of 1901, Imperial legislation which converted the Australian colonies into something like the EEC but successfully ossified the very limited expectations and assumptions of the representatives of colonial land developers, merchants and defence interests who drafted it. The Act has no ringing preamble or uplifting rhetoric concerning the principles of Australian parliamentary democracy, because there weren't any. The Act embodies the conviction that the people should continue to be governed

by highly elitist Legislative Councils which called the shots and set the boundaries of political action. This great fear of democracy was then built into an equally undemocratic Senate, elected upon the false notion that the several States have the same population and hence demand equal representation in Parliament. It is depressing that even apologists for the anti-Labor forces can seriously defend attempts to perpetuate this ludicrous Act.

L. L. ROBSON,
Department of History, University of Melbourne,
Parkville, Victoria, Australia.

The Elgin Marbles

Sir, — Stephen Spender, reviewing the Roger Hinks journals (June 29) quotes John Goldsmith's view: "Majority opinion is that cleaning the dirt of ages from the sculptures [the Elgin Marbles] vastly improved them..."

How can marble sculptures be vastly improved by the use of copper-wire brushes to scrub them? Is this a technique recommended by "majority opinion"? GRAHAM BINNS,
The British Committee for the Restitution of the Parthenon Marbles, 13a Hillgate Street, London W8.

Protecting Chatsworth

Sir, — I have enjoyed Eric Korn's "Reminders" too long and too much to relish commenting adversely on his pleantries (July 13) at the expense of the Duke of Devonshire, who is not only the Chancellor of my university but also a generous patron of the arts in the North-west. In this region, especially at present, such benefactors are as greatly valued as they are thin on the ground. I happen to know, from a personal conversation with him, how different the Duke's views on the sale of his pictures are from those light-heartedly attributed to him by Eric Korn: nevertheless, I would not have had myself open to accusations of pomposity or worse for making such a statement in your columns did I not believe that two fundamental issues are in danger of being overlooked in this *jeu d'esprit*.

First, the Duke is not selling off "these few bits and bobs" out of philistine cupidity, but with the aim of funding a Chatsworth Trust so

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Dawn Ader's *Doll* was published in 1983.
Rosemary Ashton teaches English at University College London.
M.M. Austin's books include *The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest*, 1981.
Michael Bourdeaux is Director of Keaton College.
Warwick Bray is a Reader in Latin American Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh.
Terence Cave is the author of *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance*, 1979.
Patricia Craig is co-author of *The Lady Investigator: Women detectives and spies in fiction*, 1981.
Alan Dowry is Professor of Government and International Studies at the University of Notre Dame.
Máiread Duffy's *The Passionate Shepherdess: Aphra Behn 1640-89* was published in 1977.
D.J. Enright is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Death*, 1983.
John Gage's most recent book is *Goethe on Art*, 1980.
Richard Grenier's novel *The Morrish One* has recently been published.
A.E. Halsey is Professor of Social and Administrative Studies at the University of Oxford.
Terence Hawkes is the author of *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 1977.
Paul Henley's books include *The Panare: Tradition and change on the Amazonian frontier*, 1982.
Geoffrey Hosking is Professor of Russian History at the School of Slavonic Studies, University of London.
Edward Hughes's *Marcel Proust: A study in the quality of awareness* was published last year.
P.D. James's books include *The Skull Beneath the Skin*, 1982.
Henry James's *A Society of Conflicts: Spain 1469-1714* was published last year.
Simon Karlinsky's *Russian Drama from its Beginnings to the Age of Pushkin* will be published next year.
Paul Kegan's translation of *Thyl by Impudence: Marriage and writing in pre-revolutionary France*, by Pierre Darnon, will be published next year.
H.G. Koenigsberger's books include *Enlightenment and Revolution*, 1971.
John Leach's *Romantic to Modern Literature: Essays and Ideas of Culture, 1750-1900* appeared in 1982.
Lachlan MacKinnon's *Ellor, Auden, Lowell: Aspects of the Bowdlerian inheritance* was published earlier this year.
Andrew Motion's long poem about India, *Independence*, was published in 1981.
Dervla Murphy's *Eight Feet in the Andes* was published last year.
William V. O'Brien is Professor of Government at the University of Georgetown, Washington.
David Panofsky is a barrister.
Claude Rawson's books include *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader*, 1973.
P.J. Rhodes is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Durham.
Julian Roberts is the author of *Voltaire's Benjamin*, 1982.
William Schummel's collection of poems, *Justification*, will be published later this year.
Ann Sieveling is the author of *Les Plaqueuses Graves Magdalénaises*, which will be published next year.
Thomas Stichtel is a producer for BBC Radio 3.
David Sweetman's collection of poems, *Looking into the Deep End*, was published in 1981.
Sir Crispin Tickell was British Ambassador in Mexico until last September.
John Turner is a lecturer in History at Bedford College, London.
R.O.S. Walker is the author of *Kink*, 1979.
Lawrence Whitehead is a Fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford.

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Abdy, Jane, and Charlotte Gere. *The Souls* 850
Asaf'Yev, Boris. *A Book about Stravinsky* 835
Bennett, Daphne. *Margot* 850
Brody, J.J., Catherine J. Scott, Steven A. Leblanc and Tony Berlant. *Mimbres Pottery* 852
Brecht, James. *A Parish of Rich Women* 848
Buckley, William F. *The Story of Henri Tudor* 849
Calder, Bruce J. *The Impact of Intervention* 827
Cooms, Howard and Peter (Editors). *John Skinner: Journal of a Somerset rector 1803-1834* 850
Crankschaw, Edward. *Putting up with the Russians 1947-1984* 828
Dalby, Richard. *Brom Stoker: A bibliography of first editions* 856
Dole, Petr. *Too Much of Water: Poems 1976-82* 838
Dawes, Frank Victor. *Inheritance* 847
Deacon, George. *John Clare and the Folk Tradition* 845
De Navarre, Marguerite. *The Heptameron* 830
Dickinson, Susan (Editor). *The Restless Ghost* 854
Diehl, Richard A. *Tula* 852
Ellison, David. *The Reading of Proust* 830
Elon, Amos. *The Israelis: Founders and sons* 836
Foulks, Sebastian. *A Trick of the Light* 848
Franks, Richard H. *The Whipspring Gallery* 848
Friedenreich, Kenneth (Editor). *Accompanying the Players* 846
Gilbert, Martin. *The Jews of Hope* 836
Gómez de la Serna, Ramón. *Dali* 834
Grant, Campbell. *The Rock Art of the North American Indians* 852
Green, Stephen. *Taking Sides: America's secret relations with militant Islam 1948-1967* 837
Groat, Harry. *Lost and Found: Poems 1975-1982*. *The Emperor of Outer Space* 838
Haiman, György. *Nicholas Ks* 856
Haines, Raymond B., and William T. Vickers (Editors). *Adaptive Responses of Native Amazonians* 853
Harkish, Yeshoshafat. *The Bar Kokhba Syndrome* 836
Heath, Roy A. K. *Orealla* 847
Hering, Christoph. *Die Rekonstruktion der Revolution* 851
Howell, Anthony. *Notions of a Mirror* 836
Hutchinson, R.C. *The Quixotes* 847
Jackson, Jean A. *The Fish People* 851
Jacobs, Hubert (Editor). *Documenta Matuensis III (1606-1682)* 844
Kembas, Chrysoula. *Walter Benjamin in Exile* 851
Lesley, Mary. *Africa's Vanishing Art* 852
Leblanc, Steven. *The Mimbres People* 852
Leri, Peter. *The Echoing Green: Three elegies* 838
Lewis-Williams, J. David. *The Rock Art of Southern Africa* 852
Mahindra, Indra. *The Club* 849
Maltby, William S. *Alba* 844
Meades, Jonathan. *Filthy English* 849
Miner, Valerie. *Winters Edge* 848
Mittford, Jessica. *Faces of Philip: A memoir of Philip Toynbee* 856
Moran, Emilio F. (Editor). *The Oilemma of Amazonian Development* 853
Nagel, Gordon. *The Structure of Experience* 851
Nicoll, Helen, and Jan Pienkowski. *Owl at School*. *Mog in the Fog* 854
Nietzsche, Ann. *Windowlight* 848
O'Shaughnessy, Hugh. *Grenada* 827
Oz, Amos. *In the Land of Israel* 836
Payne, Anthony. *Paul Sinito and Tony Thordike*. *Grenada: Revolution and Invasion* 827
Plunket, Robert. *My Search for Warren Harding* 848
Prince, F.T. *Later On* 838
Roberts, J.W. *City of Socrates* 831
Robinson, Eric, and David Powell (Editors). *The Later Poems of John Clare: 1837-1864* 845
Roethlis, Hans K., and Jean K. Benjamin. *Kandinsky: Catalogue raisonné of the oil-paintings. Volume Two, 1916-1944* 834
Rubin, Amnon. *The Zionist Dream* 836
Salmon, J.B. *Wealthy Corinth* 831
Simson, A.W. *Brian: Cannibalism and the Common Law* 832
Sutherland, Gillian. *Ability, Merit and Measurement* 833
Syne, John Millington. *The Collected Letters* 829
Tennyson, G.B. (Editor). *A Carlyle Reader* 846
Townsend, John Rowe. *Cloudy Bright* 854
Vaasberg, David E. *Land and Society in Golden Age Castile* 844
Wilkes, Roger. *Wallace: The final verdict* 832
Willcox, A.R. *The Rock Art of Africa* 852
Winfield, Sheila. *Collected Poems 1939-1983* 838
Wright, Kit. *Poems for 9-Year-Olds and Under* 854
Wright, Ronald. *Cut Stones and Crossroads* 853